THE EAST WINDOW

HALFORD E. LUCCOCK

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THE EAST WINDOW

And Other Sermons

By

Halford E. Luccock

The Abingdon Press

New York Cincinnati

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Printed in the United States of America

To

WILLIAM VALENTINE KELLEY

"Master of all the arts and
several sciences"

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The New Age stands as yet
Half built against the sky,
Open to every threat of storms that clamor by;
Scaffolding veils the walls,
And dim dust floats and falls,
As moving to and fro, their tasks the masons ply.[1]

—*William Watson.*

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[1] From *A Hundred Poems*, by William Watson. Reprinted by permission of Dodd, Mead & Company, Inc.

I

THE EAST WINDOW

"Who . . . have tasted . . . the powers of the age to come."—*Hebrews* 6. 5.

THE really significant landmarks of human history have been the birthdays of some new power. It is common to mark historical periods by round numbers which are convenient and easy to remember. But one age does not end and another begin because the calendar has come to a full round number, but because a new power has been unleashed. Thus we say roughly that the Middle Ages ended in 1400 or 1500 A. D. The truth is that the medieval age ended with the invention of gunpowder. A new power was harnessed, before which the battlements of feudalism were leveled. The medieval age ended with the invention of the printing press, a new power which exposed men's minds to the contagion of ideas. A new modern period of the world began in that year of miracles 1776, with those twin powers which have done so much

to create the modern world, the steam engine and the Declaration of Independence.

That great birthday on the world's calendar which came with the Christian gospel and the Christian Church was significant for the same reason. It marked the advent of a new power. In describing the Christians of the first century as those who . . . had "tasted . . . the powers of the age to come" the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews seized on the most important thing about them. They were a company of people who had experienced a new energy. That little company had tasted of a new power; they brought into the world the gift of a fresh dynamic, a new force. And in the very quality of their life they were a prophecy of the future. They faced front! Whenever it is said of a company of the disciples of Jesus, either in the first century or in the twentieth, that they have manifested the powers which are to dominate the future, the essential, major thing about them has been said. When that cannot be said it does not make much difference what else is said.

These old words gleam with a new interest to-day, for they are an accurate description of our own time. We are standing tiptoe look-

ing down the corridor of the years to a new age of mastery over the physical forces of the earth. The amazing progress of science and mechanical invention, racing on at a dizzy speed, gives startling hints to the imagination of the transformation of the world that is to come with a successive mastery of new forces in the physical world. In industry, in science we have just barely tasted of the powers of an age to come.

Every year gives new promise of a larger dominion over the earth, the sea, and the sky. Even in the amazing development of the last fifty years it doth not yet appear what we shall be.

It is almost impossible to believe that it is only twenty-two years since, for the first time in history, a flying machine rose through the air. Yet it was only that short space of time ago, a mere fraction of a second, in the whole day of human history, since Orville and Wilbur Wright, on the sand dunes of North Carolina, shocked the world by remaining up in the air in an aeroplane for twelve seconds, thus opening the door of a new age. On that day a reporter on a New York newspaper was dismissed from his job for turning in such

an impossible story! Yet twenty-one years later the whole world was encircled through the air, and continuous flights have been made at the rate of two hundred and sixty-six miles an hour.

Think of the latest force just now being transformed from a toy into a power—the radio. Nearly every great invention passes through that chrysalis stage—first a toy, then a power. A few weeks ago a large company of people in Calcutta, India, listened to messages broadcast from Pittsburgh. It is true that Pittsburgh did not have very much to say to Calcutta. There is much to think of in Mr. G. K. Chesterton's remark that "it is remarkable that the most perfect means of communication should appear at the precise moment in human history when nobody had anything to say." But that is a theme in itself. The radio is a new power of tremendous potentiality. It is sobering to think that it may soon be possible that from one third to one half of the whole human race may be brought within the sound of one voice.

We have just tasted the powers of the age to come. We are just on the verge of their action. Think of what has appeared within

the lifetime of millions now living—the telegraph, the telephone, the street-car, the automobile, the aeroplane. To-day we are talking of super-power, giant power, pooling the water power of the whole countryside. We speak of the wonders of "white coal"—of water power lifting burdens from the backs and shoulders of men and women and children—an unlimited force available for a thousand uses, ushering in a new age of power. We think what a wonderful thing it will be for the people. That is, provided the free-booters and looters who have stolen so much of the other natural resources of the country do not get hold of the water power first!

Now, it is possible to grow quite lyrical over the future of the world in the new age of superpower which we are unquestionably entering. But no one but a congenital optimist—which, in this connection, is the same thing as a congenital idiot—can wholly rejoice in this vision of a millennium of whirling wheels. Only to the shallowest minds and the blindest eyes is it a gospel of hope. To an increasing number—a number vastly increased since the "Great Disillusionment" of 1914–1918—it is a vision of despair. The recent

meeting of the American Chemical Society at Ithaca, New York, lifted the curtain to show the world a peep of the wonders of which chemistry will be capable in the next war. This view did not look much like the millennium of Saint John. It was an exact picture of Dante's hell. We have reached a new age in world history—a real birthday, a momentous landmark. For the first time since the dawn of recorded history it is possible for civilization to commit suicide. Professor Soddy, of Oxford, has put the liability of the age to come very pithily when he says, "If it ever becomes possible to release the great store of energy in the atom, the first use to be made of it will be to construct a new bomb."

A few months ago hundreds of thousands of people in New York City were out on the sidewalks early in the morning with their necks bent backwards and their eyes looking up into the sky. The sight appeared at first glance as though thousands of visitors had come to town and were taking their first look at the Woolworth Tower. But as one looked up into the heavens he was well rewarded for curiosity. Gliding over the city was the Z.R.-3, the airship which had just crossed the

Atlantic, like a beautiful silver streak across the sky, poised like a graceful bird, then swinging down low over the buildings. It was there, a shining prophecy of an age to come when similar miracles should be common. Very few looked up at that wonderful dirigible, however, without a shudder. Was it, we asked, in a sinister sense, the prophecy of an age to come? It was not a very pleasant thing to realize that the monster could have dropped bombs or gas which would make in a few moments time the whole city of New York nothing but a cinder and a memory!

We front the new age with one truth written so plainly that the world can read: that unless we taste also of a new kind of power, all the whirling of motors and beating of engines will be the orchestra of a colossal funeral march. It was not a fanatical preacher but John Galsworthy, the English author, who a few months ago seriously proposed that a moratorium be put upon science for twenty-five years. We have made, he said, of our science a monster that will devour us unless dominated by moral force.

That word "unless" of John Galsworthy's brings us back to our text with a bound.

Unless the powers of an age to come include a superpower from another realm, we, of all men—literally and without exaggeration, by the very levers and magic wands thrust into our hands, of all men of all ages—are the most miserable.

H. G. Wells once told of a "boom food" that made rats as large as lions, but they were as fierce as lions too. It is not desirable that rats or lions or men should grow bigger or mightier unless they grow better.

The powers of to-morrow are not all born in a laboratory or a machine shop. That birthday of hope which came into the world when the first heralds of the cross proclaimed the gospel of Jesus and the resurrection, gave men the taste of a fresh dynamic. It was a new sort of energy—eternal life! It brought into being a new quality of superpower—Faith, which reached back and reached up to the Unseen which is eternal and tapped its resources.

It was a quality of life, not merely a quantity in the sense of life without end. It was a power by which men not only proclaimed but demonstrated—"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

That energy lifted men out of the slums of Roman life, out of its sewers, and sent them out on a new level of distinction and power. Under its potency men and women faced death as a trivial accident because they had tasted a power which far transcended it. To the threat of death they made much the same answer as that made by Ralph Waldo Emerson to a premillennial fanatic who one day rushed up to him in the streets of Boston and cried, "Mr. Emerson, do you know that the world is going to end next Friday?"

"Very well," said Mr. Emerson, calmly. "I can get along without it."

These Christians got along without it very well. They were living in the power of an endless life.

But the words carry another meaning of the largest sweep and the largest hope as we look out on our own world. In a different sense, and doubtless a sense which never occurred to many who had tasted of the powers of the eternal world in that early day, they had also tasted of powers that were increasingly to dominate and shape this present world in the years that were to follow.

The forces that were in play in their lives

were the forces that were to mold a new Europe and a new civilization in the days to come. Here on this earth there was a new age to come of which the first disciples of Jesus had grasped the powers and shown them forth in prophecy. The day on which Paul crossed the narrow strip of water which separated Asia from Europe was one of the great red-letter days of human history. To the outward eye nothing of any importance whatever happened. What could be more trivial than that a wandering preacher should stop at a little town and speak to a few people, mostly women, who had gathered at the seashore for a prayer meeting? Yet that scene was the first advent in Europe of the force that was to influence all its to-morrows. In Paul's evangel and experience were the seeds of a new order of life, the very powers of an age to come. All the transformation which the Christian faith was to effect, the hidden force of a new valuation of man, the triumph of a growing democracy, all that was won for human life at Runnymede—all these were implicit in the first taste of the powers of that Christian gospel.

With a backward look at the past we may

lift up our hearts to a great faith to-day. Against the bleak outlook of a materialistic civilization there is to be set a spiritualizing force that can dominate and redeem the world. Those whose lives are a real expression of the mind of Christ have laid hold of the powers that are to shape and transform the life of the world in the coming generations.

It is a stupendous, a staggering faith. It is not child's play to keep one's grasp on such a faith. We may very easily look out of our windows on the street of the world and say: "I do not see any such ideals in ascendency. I see a world in the grip of hate and greed." Such would be a fair report. There is hate and greed on every street corner, at every border line, at every place where men and nations meet, at every international crossroads.

But the great faith that the ideas of Jesus are the powers of to-morrow has solid grounds which run beneath the surface of life and which can be seen and felt. The test of the noise which a thing makes on a street corner is never a true test of its importance. Consider the very time of which we have been speaking, the days of Nero. Had you asked any citizen of Rome the strange question, "What is

the most important thing in the world today?" he would doubtless have pointed to the marching legions returning from some new conquest. But we know that the most important thing on earth, in every conceivable sense, was buried down deep in the catacombs in darkness and obscurity—a little Christian prayer meeting was being held. There was being generated the power that was to shape to-morrow.

Look out of your window some raw, snowy day in March. The ground is locked in winter and covered with snow. But brush away the snow here and there. Underneath it you will find the pale pink glow of the first arbutus. It is a note of spring in a world still in the grip of winter. The arbutus does not take the winter too seriously. It is not overawed by the bluster of the wild March winds. By sinking its roots down into the earth it has tasted the powers of the age to come and has risen to prophesy of the great awakening, when a new life shall burst from the swelling earth and create another spring.

So in the increasing groups which have taken Jesus in earnest and shown forth in their lives the energy of God and the mind of

Christ in human relationships, are the powers of to-morrow.

Broadly speaking, the great faith to be held and lived for and died for is that the power of the years to come is spiritual. It will be not so much an age of greater horse power as of greater man power.

Let us look at two of the ideals of Jesus which are working as a mighty leaven in the mind of the world.

I

There is an increasing play in the world's life of Jesus' valuation of human personality. The power of the age to come of which a growing multitude have tasted, is the recognition of the supreme value of the individual man. The weakness and the waste of the age that is dying have been its disregard of human values when compared with property values. Napoleon expressed the feeling of that dying age perfectly in his reported words, when told that his expedition to Russia would cost a million men: "What are a million men to me?" Probably Napoleon never said that. It is one of those sayings which are almost too perfect to be true. But whether he said it or not, he

lived it. And a multitude of his imitators, "little Napoleons," "near Napoleons," and "would-be Napoleons," have lived it also. And that is a voice of an age that is dying. If I did not believe it, I would not go through the mummery of standing in a Christian pulpit. Let us not imagine that the age is dead. There is still an appalling disregard of human personality.

Thomas Hood might have uttered his piercing cry to-day just as well as one hundred years ago:

> "O God, that bread should be so dear
> And flesh and blood so cheap!"

We have such a twisted sense of values. The other day I stood on lower Broadway, New York City, and watched a parade that seemed at first sight like the advance of an invading army. It was headed by a company of soldiers heavily armed with loaded pistols. Then followed a dozen armored trucks, from the little barred windows of which there gleamed guns. Traffic was stopped to allow this bristling parade to pass. On inquiry I found out it was not an invasion but simply that they were moving the Sub-Treasury up the street a few

blocks. It was a striking commentary on our civilization that when a few million dollars are to be moved it means calling out the army. It was perfectly right, of course, to guard these millions of dollars in the form of gold coin. The city called out all its resources to guard that wealth. But as I saw that parade moving by under guard I thought bitterly of the blindness of the country which allows a great stream of its boys and girls to pass through the Juvenile Courts and to be fed into the hoppers of the cotton mills and the sweat-shops. The cynical attitude of many would seem to say: "Ah, but the gold is real property! And the boys and girls are only—well, only boys and girls." But the time which has come to birth in our own day is realizing the tragic blindness of such a view.

Wendell Phillips, when he was making his magnificent fight against the cruel materialism of the slave traffic, spoke words of deep truth when he said: "Pile your capital as high as the skies. If it is founded on iniquity, the pulse of a girl will beat it down!" It is remarkable to think of how that prophecy was literally fulfilled—in a manner of which Phillips did not dream. For it was actually

the pulse of a little girl which beat down the great power of slavery. It was the heart throb of a little girl-mother in a New England parsonage—Harriet Beecher Stowe.

With equal truth we can say to the capitalism which would fatten itself even on the bodies and souls of little children, "Run your smokestacks up till they touch the skies. Pile your dividends into the banks until they burst the sides. If your system is founded on iniquity, or if its profits come from the exploitation of little children, the pulse of a single wronged or defrauded child will beat it down. For in that pulse is the mightiest force in the world—the heartbeat of the Son of God.

II

Jesus' sense of brotherhood is the power of tomorrow. There is much on the surface to discourage that faith. One of the most popular figures of speech to-day, so popular that it has been worn threadbare, is "the rising tide." We are told of the rising tide of color, the rising tide of nationalism, the rising tide of race. Deeper than them all is the rising tide of brotherhood. There may be much on the surface that discounts that faith, but the

turbulent waves of an angry surface obscure the facts to the onlooker.

Underneath all the angry tossing to and fro on the surface there is a calm, steady advancing flow of an incoming rising tide, unaffected by all the agitation of the waves. On the sea of life to-day there is a rising tide of brotherhood. The old powers are faced by a new one.

"For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main."

A few months ago a thoughtless speaker on the Pacific Coast flung out irresponsibly across the Pacific words that are a symbol of the powers of the age that is passing. He said that "the best way to cool a fever was by power of cold steel." The power in the world's life to-morrow will not be cold steel but warm blood.

A gripping symbol of that quickening in the soul of the world now going on was that unique and poetic naval engagement where, in accordance with the treaty of the Limitations of Armament with England, France, and Japan, the partially completed battleship

Washington was finally sunk under the fire of our own ships off the coast of Virginia. When all the elements of that engagement are considered, it is one of the most moving sea stories that were ever told. That is a large claim to make when we recall the sublime adventures on the sea. There have been wonderfully thrilling experiences of the stout hearts who,

> "With a pair of stout shoon
> And a seagoing tune,"

have gone out to make history on the deep.

Not even the story of those who first rounded the Pillars of Hercules, or the great battle of England against the Spanish galleons in the Channel, touches the mind like this sinking of the Washington. For it was a battle between yesterday and to-morrow; a struggle between the old idea of brute force and the new idea of a spiritual brotherhood. Say all you wish to about the deficiencies of the Washington Conference on the Limitations of Armament. It left much to do, but at least it faced the dawn and took a step toward the new age.

What a gospel for to-day is that increasing brotherhood which comes from Christ! In

these days when the malicious energies of so many men are being given to building fences of hate and antagonism, let us work to destroy the things which separate and build up the things which unite, in that great steadying faith of Gladstone, who said after the defeat of the reform bill for which he had labored so hard, "Time is on our side." Time *is* on our side—on the side of human brotherhood because that is God's side.

We have not been discussing a blind automatic force that works without regard to human agencies. Only as men taste, experience, and express those forces of Christ do they rise to ascendency. What are the powers of your life? What is the propelling force which drives you through seven days a week? Is it the power of an age that is dying, with its grasping greed, its barbed-wire exclusiveness, or is it the power of Christ with his energy and motive force of love? Which way do you face—toward yesterday or to-morrow?

II

YOUTH AND THE ELDER STATESMEN

"Praise him in the assembly of the elders."—*Psalms 107. 32.*

Because if there is any place where the word of the Lord needs to be spoken it is where a group of the elder statesmen get together. These words, which occur again and again in the Psalms, may well be regarded as God's whisper to youth. For we do not find anywhere in the Bible that abominable modern heresy that "children should be seen and not heard." Instead we have the declaration of the Old Testament, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength," and the encouragement of the New Testament, "Let no man despise thy youth."

Our text is a divine exhortation to youth to speak up. It says: "Do not be overawed by all the accumulated traditions and prestige of the elder generation. Get into the meeting by some hook or crook and get the floor on a point of personal privilege. Get up and say:

"We rise to a question of high privilege. We will live in the world a much longer time than you will. It will be our world for a long time after you have left it. It is the privilege of youth to have something to say about the kind of a world we are going to live in."

Let me not be misunderstood. No thoughtful mind ever valued lightly the heritage from the past. That is a noble word of Phillips Brooks, profoundly true—"A reverence for the sublimities of yesterday is the condition of a fine perception of the hidden triumphs of tomorrow." In one sense the assembly of the elders with which we are all surrounded is the cloud of witnesses described by Saint Paul, the glorious company of those who have gone before us and who have lived, worked and died for a better world. From their hands we have received the priceless gifts which they won.

"They climbed the steep ascent of heaven
Through peril, toil and pain.
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train."

The way for youth to praise God in that assembly of the elders is to do the work of

to-day with half the zeal with which they did theirs, and to face the tasks of to-day with half the courage they brought to theirs. One of the dangers of this time and generation is the danger of blindness to the values of the experience of the past. There are a great many young people to-day who mistake the giggles of the younger set for the Book of Wisdom and are liable to confuse the lights of a moving picture palace with the eternal stars. Mrs. Gertrude Atherton has punctured the inflated egotism of a section of the so-called younger generation, in her words, "The whole country has gone crazy over youth. The most astonishingly bad books create a furor because from end to end they glorify postwar youth at its worst, and the stage is almost as bad."

Old age has no monopoly on "bunk." If you need to be convinced on that point, read some of the novels of the younger generation—if you have a strong stomach—and you will know it is true. The first step of youth toward any service to the world that is worth while is to get down on its knees and thank heaven, fasting, for the high heritage of those who blazed the trail and passed on, and to pray

that some small portion of their spirit may descend upon them.

I have tried to say this in plain English. Yet I cannot feel that in these words we have exhausted the meaning of our text. It is a word of encouragement, a firm and friendly hand laid upon the shoulder. Whenever the Ancient and Honorable Company of Elder Statesmen get together, whether in a Sanhedrin, or Parliament, or Senate, or a Board of Trustees or Directors, whenever the word of the Lord needs to be spoken and you think you know what it is, get up and say it! Don't be afraid of breaking up the meeting. That may be the best thing that could happen. Frequently the hope of the world depends on breaking up a few meetings where all the people have petrified in their chairs.

I cannot think of this text without thinking of a young man who stood up a good many years ago in an "assembly of the elders." It was one of the most august and dignified assemblies which ever convened. The pomp and solemnity of the ages rested on their shoulders. The prestige of authority was graven on their faces and embroidered on their gowns. It was the Jewish Sanhedrin, suddenly convened in

the night. Before them stood a young Man, unawed by the grandeur and trappings of power, a young Man clad in the majesty of courage, who announced, "I am come that I might bear witness to the truth." That truth to which Jesus witnessed has created a new world!

There are some high services which youth can and must contribute to the world's life. Unless youth gives these things to the world they will not come from other source. They are its reasonable and spiritual service.

I

1. The first thing which youth can bring and which the world desperately needs is the gift of *an honest criticism.* I do not mean a flippant or irreverent denunciation or tirade against the present order, but a fearless, honest criticism. For youth brings into the world the priceless gifts of a pair of fresh eyes not yet affected with astigmatism—and an open mind.

A young man some time ago was holding in his arms the first very young baby which he had ever been allowed to touch. He was in a festive mood for the reason that access to the

baby could not be denied him—because the baby was his own. As he was whirling the infant gayly around the room the lady who had a half-interest in the baby kept warning him of impending danger, pleading with him "to look out for the baby's head!"

"What's the matter with his head?" inquired the father.

"There is a soft spot on the top of it," warned the mother.

"Well," replied the father, anxiously, "you ought to send for the doctor right away."

"No," said the mother. "The doctor could not do anything about it. The soft spot is there to allow room for the brain to grow. The bone has not completely set."

That is the real glory of youth: *the bone has not completely set.* There is still room for the brain to grow, and occasionally—oh, miracle of miracles!—opportunity for a new idea to find its way within the bone box of the brain and start the mind working.

The tragedy is that in so many cases the bone sets so early and so completely. How tightly and solidly it sets sometimes! Many men who go around telling the world that they are "hard-headed business men" are entirely

too modest. They understate the case. The head is not merely hard—it is solid! There is no more chance for a new idea to get in than there is for a breeze to blow through a billiard ball.

Youth looks out on the world with fresh eyes, with vision unaffected by the blindness of tradition and convention. Without that redeeming criticism of fresh minds the world is hopeless. Emerson says: "The world asks each new youngster that comes into it this question: 'Wilt thou become one of us?' And the soul in each one answers heartily, 'No!'" The world has no interest so deep as to cherish that resistance.

As youth looks out on the world to-day there should be before its mind two pictures. The first is that of the world as it was once vizualized by a young Man barely thirty, a world under the domination of love and fellowship, a state of things to which this young Man gave the name "the kingdom of God." The other picture is that of the world as it is to-day—a playground for vast forces which blight and sear and maim human life. Pointing to that last picture, let youth say to the college of elders, "You may be used to that

sort of thing, but I am not used to it, and by the help of God I am not going to get used to it!"

A sufficient section of the youth of to-day has the moral and intellectual qualifications adequate for such a redeeming criticism of the world's way of life. Amid all the hectic denunciation of the present generation, the calm appraisal by Arnold Bennett in his book *Things That Have Interested Me,* strikes far nearer the truth. He says: "The new generation—I mean the generation which in 1914 was just old enough to fight, nurse, or otherwise serve in the war—probably shows a more striking change from the one before it than any generation has shown for at least two centuries. A change in mind, spirit, and manner! The change of manner, of course, irritates a large number of persons who are shocked because the world continues to go round after they have begun to suffer from rheumatism and baldness. The change of mind and spirit, however, is more important. As regards mind, the latest generation is better educated, more cultivated, less hypocritical, more courageous, more honest, less stuffy than its predecessors, and in all these

respects has quite marvelously improved on its predecessors' predecessors."[1]

The most perfect picture of the rôle of youth in the world's life is Hans Christian Andersen's story, "The Emperor's New Clothes." It is the story of two clever rogues who had persuaded the king that they had produced a marvelous new sort of cloth. They sang the beauties of its delicate texture so eloquently that the king became so befuddled that he could not tell whether there was any cloth actually present or not. When the king finally ventured to parade in the supposed new clothes, all the courtiers upheld the fiction that it was wonderfully woven cloth where nothing at all existed. Their timid minds echoed "Yes, yes" to any royal opinion. "Notice the sparkle of the sunlight on the cloth!" the courtiers exclaimed as the naked king passed by. Finally a boy standing on the sidewalk blurted out the brutal truth: "Why, he has nothing on at all!"

Such a brutal rôle amid imposing falsehood is youth's place in the world. A great many frauds are parading up and down the earth.

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[1] From *Things that Have Interested Me*, by Arnold Bennett. Copyright, 1921, George H. Doran Company, publishers.

Much passes under the name of Christian civilization about which honest, open-eyed youth is saying to-day, "There is nothing Christian about it."

Youth, of course, should not be under any pleasant delusion that the world is clamoring for its criticism of the present order. The attitude of the world to the suggestions of youth is usually precisely that of the church to young William Carey when he offered to go to India as a missionary—"Young man, sit down!"

Yet young men have somehow or other kept up the irritating habit of standing up. Frequently the edge of the protest of youth is dulled by the soothing answer: "Yes, dear, we are glad to have your criticism. It is very sweet of you to be so interested in all these big things, but be sure your criticism is *constructive.* Do not let there be anything destructive."

That is all very well and in a sense very wise. But often the only kind of constructive criticism worth anything is the kind you do with an ax. If you are going to erect a new building on a plot already in use, the first constructive step is to cut down some of the

obstructions which block the new plan. When the pioneers pushed through the tangled wilderness of America and transformed it into farms, they applied some very constructive criticism to the underbrush and trees. To build a log cabin calls for some destructive tools—the hatchet and an ax as well as the hammer. So does the transformation of the social order into the kingdom of God.

You don't get very far merely picking up a stray piece of paper here and there on the outside of the building. Nor, on the other hand, do you help greatly by dynamiting the whole structure. The Christian task is not one for the bomb-thrower. It cannot use the rage of a blind Samson who would push over the pillars of the whole building. It is the task which an architect faces in making over an old house. It is a task to be faced with due reverence, patience, courage, and a real plan.

Yet the assembly of the elders is terribly afraid of courage plus any new plan. They view with alarm the prospect of doing anything. Take the greatest question facing the world to-day—that of war. The usual attitude, sometimes spoken frankly, sometimes only implicit, is this: "Of course war is a terri-

ble thing, but don't really do anything about it. Say all you wish to, of course. Put in all the 'Whereas' you desire. Grandly begin,

"Whereas, War is the greatest collective sin of our times"—

"Whereas, It is utterly opposed to the spirit and teaching of Jesus"—

but always stop before you reach the "Therefore, Be it *Resolved*—."

The most important social fact of our time is that an increasing company of youth is reaching the "Therefore, Be it *Resolved!*" There is an old adage to the effect that "he who pays the piper calls the tune." In millions of lives laid down in the Great War youth has paid a price that staggers and outruns the power of the imagination of man to conceive. Youth has paid the piper and youth will call the tune. It will not be any screeching hymn of hate but a great chorus of blended voice and languages in "Blest be the tie that binds."

So praise him in the assembly of the elders. The previous question before the assembly to-day is one on which you must stand and be counted: The election of Jesus Christ to the leadership of the world.

Too long we have been content with the teaching of a refined and gentle docility in the church. The public services of religion have frequently appeared to the minds of outsiders as "the unpropitious spectacle of a mild-mannered gentleman intent on rendering a group of docile people still more docile."

That is a long distance from the main business of Jesus. Jesus never seemed to worry very much about docility. He gave his life as a terribly destructive criticism of a world of hate and greed and lust, and to put in its place a world of love and fellowship.

Make yours that wonderful petition of Carl Sandburg's called "Prayers of Steel." The first petition is the necessary one of destruction:

"Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
Let me pry loose old walls.
Let me lift and loosen old foundations."

The second petition is the aspiration to be a part of a new order which shall touch the sky:

"Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.
Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper together.

Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central girders.
Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through blue nights into white stars."[1]

II

The second great gift of youth to the world is *the spirit of intelligent adventure,* of daring, of the abandonment of self in the exhilaration of a new enterprise.

Youth has freedom from old fears and hesitation. It is not shackled by the deadly paralysis of satisfaction with things as they are. That spirit of adventure is the world's chief capital available for new enterprises. When that capital is impaired or dissipated the world will face the opportunities of the age only to hear those words of doom, "No funds!" That spirit is dissipated very easily. It was a wise, if somewhat cynical, piece of advice given by Victor Cherbuliez, "Lay up for yourself a large stock of enthusiasms in your youth, for you will lose a good many of them by the way." That is tragically true. One of the heaviest burdens the world bears to-day is the so-called leadership of men in whose

[1] From Prayers of Steel, by Carl Sandburg. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt & Company.

hearts the fires of enthusiasm have either completely died or else have been so heavily banked that they furnish no motive power. These leaders look at the adventure of actually making a Christian world as a quixotic dream. Miss M. Carey Thomas, ex-president of Bryn Mawr, came back from a trip around the world two years ago and said that the primary trouble with the world as it seemed to her was "an oversupply of elder statesmen." She said that she did not find rulers in any country under fifty years of age. Through these rulers of an elder generation the grip of the dead hand of the past is fastened on the life of the nations. The old code is supreme and the stately precedents hold sway without much regard to whether they render any real service to the present day or not. The old order abides unchanged. Thus the world is kept in ruts that lead down blind alleys.

G. K. Chesterton has paid his respects to this hard rigidity of custom and order in satirical verses that sting:

"The men that worked for England
They have their graves at home;
And bees and birds of England
About the cross can roam.

"But they that fought for England,
Following a falling star,
Alas, alas for England,
They have their graves afar!

"And they that rule in England,
In stately conclave met,
Alas, alas for England,
They have no graves as yet!"[1]

Into a world so weighted down, youth comes with a redeeming venturesomeness. That essential trait of youth is an essential mark of Christianity. Christianity is a venture. It is an unspeakable misfortune that it has ever been made to resemble a home for incurable invalids. True Christianity is instinct with the spirit of the rebellion of youth against a too placid existence. That rebellion was well put by Edna Ferber in the protest of one of her characters against "hours for massages, and taking gentle walks in the parks, and going to concerts, when there is a whole world to wallop!"

A whole world to wallop! A world of exploiting greed, of festering hate. That is the call of Christ. Youth will find plenty of

[1] From "The Ballad of St. Barbara," by G. K. Chesterton. Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons, publishers, New York and London.

opposition as it takes that call in earnest. Opposition will run all the way from active fighting to the still more intolerable patronage. Youth will hear much about its "half-baked" ideas. But that epithet is its chief glory. If the choice must be made between ideas that are half-baked and those that are hard-boiled, there is a great deal more hope in the half-baked ideas, for they are alive, fermenting, rising, growing. We ought not to forget that Jesus said that the greatest power on earth is a half-baked idea; in other words, yeast, leaven, restlessly working to transform. The thoughts of youth are the yeast of the world.

No one who has ever seen "Peter Pan" will forget the stirring duel between the pirate, Captain Hook, and Peter Pan. The pirate is unable to conquer him and begins to fear that he is struggling against some magic power which he does not know.

"Who are you?" gasps the pirate.

"I am Youth!" answers Peter Pan. He was invincible.

So to-day the struggle is on between the ancient and established order of pirates and the Spirit of Youth. Let youth in confidence turn its sword against the whole pirate crew

that sails up and down our main streets, a crew which sails under every flag but acknowledges its supreme allegiance to the one flag that flies above them all, The Jolly Roger, the skull and crossbones of the Freebooter!

After all, the story which youth has liked best from time immemorial is a story of piracy. Here is the best one of all, waiting for you to jump into it headlong. "Sail the seas with God," and turn a world of piracy into a world of brotherhood!

III

FACING THE MUSIC

"And when they had sung a hymn, they went out."—*Matthew 26. 30.*

THAT stirring phrase, "facing the music," is never used except in connection with some sort of unpleasant consequences. Why? All music is not a dirge. There are major as well as minor keys; *crescendo* as well as *diminuendo* movements. Facing the music should not be all punishment or an endurance test. There can be no better description of meeting the richest and finest experiences of life than these very words, so unreasonably reserved for dire and painful things—"Facing the music." The finest thrills and largest achievements of life come from squarely facing great music and letting life move to its rhythm and harmony.

Some people never resolutely face anything. Life hits them in the back while they are conducting some sort of a retreat. All their expe-

riences, both pleasant and sad, could be summed up in the report, "Shot in the back." They back away from obligations and risks. They go through life like a dexterous crab, side-stepping great issues, duties, and opportunities. The direct, frontal, head-on approach to any of the major engagements of living is always avoided. The excuses framed to themselves usually fall under the time-honored military formulas of "a strategic retreat"; a "Fabian policy of avoidance of conflict"; "consolidating their position"; or a wise prudence—*prudence,* that stereotyped motto of all the cowards in the world! They never forget themselves in any sudden madness. Consequently, they miss the stir and quickening of the whole being which comes from facing the music of the great marching tunes and symphonies of courage and faith.

"You can have it for a song"—how frequently we hear and use the words. How seldom we stop to think how profoundly true they are. You can have the world for a song —but you can have it on no other terms. You can master it as you approach it with a song, with a positive courageous attitude, with a heart that carries the lilt of victory already

sounding within it. It was written of William Blake:

> "He came to the desert of London town
> Gray miles long.
> He wandered up and he wandered down
> Singing a quiet song."

And the town, even great London town, did not crush him or defeat him. The town—the world—was his, for he faced it with a song.

Let us try to catch some of the joys and the thrills which come from facing directly and positively some of the great strains of music which sound out through the world and which every soul should hear.

I

The *reveille* sends its shrill notes out over every life. It is probably the best-hated tune in the world. The entire army gave its amen of approval to that popular song of the war—"Some day I'm going to murder the bugler." It is stern, merciless in its command—"Get up!" By many it would hardly be called music. It sounds more like the crack of doom. It *is* the crack of doom—for destiny is determined for everyone by the attitude he takes

to that strain of music known as the Reveille. "Get up; go to work—get into the fight—fall in!" These are the words to the *reveille.* And the fate of everyone is wrapped up in his attitude to these demands.

Have you faced that music, or have you run from it? Or merely turned over in your sleep?

That reveille call of duty divides men into two great classes—those who have faced it and those who have run from it. Some have never faced the music, have never pulled themselves together, never answered "Here!" to the clear, high notes of duty—the call of enterprise—the demand for downright hard work.

The day in camp begins with reveille. And life begins with it too. Only as we answer the demand that stirs us out of selfish sleep, out of sluggish comfort, into sacrificial activity in a great cause, does *life* in the deepest sense really begin. There is always an amateurish quality about those who have never willingly and resolutely faced the music of the reveille. They are not quite real. They are at best dilettante spectators, never the players; camp followers, never the fighters; part of the background—"ladies and gentlemen of the ensem-

ble," never the actors. They are like unbaptized infants, not necessarily damned, but nevertheless never quite fully initiated into the great family of the sons of God. The greatest danger with a life is not that it may go wrong; it is that it may not go at all. The *reveille* is the critical test, for its music sings into the heart "Get up—let's go!" When that bugle note is not faced but is answered with the Great Refusal of the turned back, life begins to dwindle and shrivel.

It is a common evasion to substitute *reverie* for *reveille*. The two words look alike and sound alike. But they are as far apart as the bottomless pit and the dome of heaven. Reverie belongs to the armchair; reveille to the front line of battle. Confronted with the tasks and tangles of a confused world, the line of least resistance is to muse about them, to dream, to talk indolently and complacently. The harder, glorious thing is to face the call for action which tingles like an alarm clock, quickening every faculty of one's being. A French artist has recently proclaimed that women of the Western world are losing their grace from always sitting in chairs. A good many falls from grace come from lolling about

in chairs when the occasion calls for an erect posture with iron in the soul and in the backbone.

The perfect words set to the music of the reveille are those found in the old Sanskrit poem and translated into English under the title, "The Salutation of the Dawn." Write them on the tablets of your heart:

"Listen to the Exhortation of the Dawn!
Look to this Day, for it is Life.
The very Life of Life.
In its brief course lie all the Verities
And Realities of your Existence;
The Bliss of Growth,
The Glory of Action,
The Splendor of Beauty;
For Yesterday is but a Dream,
And To-morrow is only a Vision;
But To-day well lived
Makes every Yesterday a Dream of Happiness
And every To-morrow a Vision of Hope.
Look well, therefore, to this Day!
Such is the Salutation of the Dawn."

When we answer with eyes front and a forward stride the reveille call of duty and service, that music which plays men into action, as the Scotch bagpipes with their shrill notes waking the ancient fidelities in the heart

played the troops up into front line, we reach a pitch and quality of life that can never even be dimly imagined by those who stuff their ears and turn backward.

II

The Hallelujah Chorus is music to shake the soul. You have heard it and been lifted to your feet by its ecstatic rhythm. Have you ever faced the ecstatic truth which the great music expresses and made it your own? That chorus is a great pæan of faith—an oratorio of affirmation. Men can face literally anything if they have faced the music of "He shall reign forever and ever." Handel, expressing his emotion during the composition of that chorus, describes an experience that could come only to him: "All heaven was spread out before my eyes, and I was overpowered with awe." But an experience just as genuine, exalted, and uplifting may be had by everyone who takes into his soul the enlivening faith of Christ as the overcomer and Redeemer of the world. It is a tragedy when men do not face that music and allow it to set every chord of their being into vibration. Without it life becomes mere dreary, desolate prose. Not

many ever reach the deep desolation which Bertrand Russell counsels as the height of wisdom—that of "building one's philosophy on the *firm foundations* [the italics are ours!] of an unyielding despair." How firm a foundation! But a great many do shut their ears to faith and content themselves with that "candid discontent," which Marius the Epicurean concluded was the maximum which a well-ordered life could win from events and impressions. A candid discontent—that's a pretty thin purse for a long journey!

F. W. H. Meyers said with great insight that if he could ask the Sphinx one question and have it answered, his question would be this, "Is the universe friendly?" It is a supreme question and one to which Christ furnishes the supreme answer. To see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is to know that the universe is friendly. The effect of that faith in men is exactly the effect which the Hallelujah Chorus which so magnificently proclaims it, had on the first audience which listened to it, and on every audience since—*it lifts them to their feet.*

When the "Messiah" was first sung, at Covent Garden, London, in 1743, King George

II and the audience were literally swept to their feet at the opening shout of triumph of that great chorus—"Hallelujah." So a faith in God as revealed in Christ—as the friendly face shining through the curtain of the world—says commandingly to every soul which opens to it—"Son of man, stand upon thy feet." And when the feet and ankle bones receive strength and men go through life walking and leaping and praising God, the old miracle at the beautiful gate of the Temple is repeated endlessly.

A vital faith in Christ as the final power in the universe lifts a man to his feet in that lonely, personal, moral struggle which everyone must make if he is to master his soul. It lifts him to his feet as he looks out on the riddle of life, and enables him to find a coherent unity in its confusion. It arms him with hope and courage in the fierce struggle with the forces of evil which trample the earth.

Christ is the high C in the scale of life, the supreme keynote struck when Love took up the chords of life. When any life vibrates in harmony with that note it grows richly musical. Those who first tried to express its

power commandeered the most opulent and musical words in the language. These are the nouns we find in the New Testament describing the Christ-filled life: "riches, fullness, abundance, life, power." The nouns all have adjectives to match—words that are "half battles." These men marched through life with all the trumpets blowing and with banners floating to the sky.

Life need not be a burdensome drag. It can march to the music of a great faith.

"Day long a craven cry goes up.
The people drink a bitter cup,
They languish, seeking stones for bread.
Brave faith seems fallen—the old hope dead,
The babblers will not cease,
The people have no peace.
Wake, wake your strings of fire!
God for us—strike the lyre!"

III

The still, sad music of humanity—have you ever really heard it? It is a major *opus* in the world's concert—and if you have never patiently listened until it steals through you, as one of Schubert's songs without words floats out through a concert hall

and into the secret places of the heart, you have missed one of life's highest experiences. This music will never assault you like the blare of a brass band parading down the street. It is *still* music. He that hath ears to hear let him hear. You can go through life and never hear a single plaintive note of it. God pity you if you do, for you will miss the crowning experience of life. Many have done so. They have turned their backs to it—as the rich young ruler did. That was a fine inspiration of George Frederick Watts when he painted his portrait of the Great Refusal and showed only the back of the young man. That was, after all, the essential thing about him. The call of the need of men was too plaintive a music to face. If we do not face it, we have never heard the melody of earth. Our souls are in one dimension—they have no depth. We are neophytes who have never been initiated into the deep mysteries of fellowship. We are scrambling children on our way to a picnic, with ears attuned only to the boom of a merry-go-round organ.

It is perilously easy to become deaf—to shut out entirely from our attention and interest

the sound of pain, the echoes of suffering, need, and sin.

Joseph Pulitzer, the newspaper publisher, in his late years suffered so intensely from nervousness that noise was a torture to him. In his house in Seventy-third Street, New York, he caused the tightly closed windows to be guarded by triple thicknesses of glass (the only ventilation coming through the fireplace chimney) and silk threads were stretched across the latter to break the sound. Three doors separated the room from the rest of the house and the floor of the room was on ball bearings to prevent vibration! With the same sedulous care many people have created for themselves a spiritual vacuum by triple-plating the house of their heart.

Wordsworth was right in recognizing as true music the sound of the world's need and suffering. One of the most poetical lines ever written is that of Homer which echoes through the Odyssey—catching exquisitely the musical rumble of a wave breaking on the beach—*polyphlosboios thallassa*—"the loud resounding sea." That sound is a rhythmic beat, sending out its incidental music through all the wanderings of Ulysses.

There is a resounding sea which should echo through all of life—the sea of humanity. Jesus was never out of hearing of its waves. As he looked out on that far-stretching sea of life, he was filled with compassion for harassed sheep without a shepherd. As that sea broke at his feet in the voice of troubled souls, he was quick to hear, patient to listen, swift to act. He faced the still, sad music of humanity from his first appearance in the wilderness till the day of his ascension.

Have you ever heard the murmur of the sea of humanity, of need, of aspiration, as it envelops your every step? Have you faced it as Jesus did, and as you respond to it, let it lift your life into harmony with the listening, sympathetic Christ?

It will change the direction and movement of your life if you hear it. "One can at least contribute an attitude," says one of the characters in Edith Wharton's *A Son at the Front,* speaking of the war. One can at least contribute an attitude in the struggle of humanity for justice, for freedom, for light. Each one who contributes to this struggle the attitude of a sympathetic listener, not only hears music which ennobles life but helps to create

that instrument of salvation called by Bishop F. J. McConnell "the listening church."

IV

The Death March concludes life's concert for us all. It might be thought that that music must be faced whether we will or no. But we have here the same alternatives as with the other high experiences of life. We can face it fearlessly and exultantly or slink from it. It can be for us a sevenfold choral amen to life or the drum beat of a convict's march to execution. It all depends on the inner attitude we bring to it. When we face that final music with the surge of a fearless faith within us, we make it serve as a Victory March.

What, on the face of it, could be more extravagant than those words of a familiar hymn:

> "And may the music of thy name
> Refresh my soul in death"?

"Refresh"—what a preposterous word in that connection! Yet how accurate a description of a Christian experience a million times repeated!

But why all this prose? Hear the con-

clusion of the whole matter. Hear a great soul actually facing the music of the Death March—one whose music is the gladness of the world:

"At noonday in the bustle of man's worktime
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be.
'Strive and thrive'; cry 'Speed, oh, fight on forever,'
'There as here!'"

We began our thought with a text. You may have thought we have long ago forgotten it. Not exactly. We have kept it till the end so that it might light up the whole path we have traveled.

"When they had sung a hymn they went out." That simple, quiet statement cannot hide the heart, the sorrowing heart, the daring heart, the fluttering heart, of those who went out with Jesus on his last night. That music was all which we have been thinking of. It was *reveille.* "Now is the time. Come"—the call to action. It was a tremendous *chorus of faith.* It was the *still, sad music of humanity*—the expression of Jesus' love of men which counted no cost. It was a *Death March* of one who

gave his life a ransom for many. Jesus faced all this in that night of nights. It is our high legacy to be joint heirs with Christ of that victorious Spirit.

IV

THE EMERGING CHRIST

"It was not possible that he should be holden."
—*Acts 2. 24.*

One of the eternal fascinations of the gospel is the realization that the clash of forces portrayed there are not merely single events at a point of time, but have run through history like a pattern on a great tapestry worked in the warp and woof, repeated again and again. Thus Easter is both a dated historical fact and a constantly recurring experience. It has a sublime meaning and power once for all accomplished in the dawn of the first Easter morning. Yet it is also a pattern, which runs through the centuries and by its repetition gives them a unified and cumulative meaning. Again and again through the march of the years the living Christ has burst the bonds with which he has been held by men and walked the earth anew with fresh revelation and power.

Let your imagination conceive of the history of the world since the first Easter as a

vast panorama, a richly colored and figured tapestry such as sometimes covered the walls of a medieval palace. The loom of time has worked into the fabric the unfolding story of the life of men and nations. Again and again there appears the dramatic climax of the opened tomb and the emergence of the living Christ into the world's life. For each new expression of the spirit of Christ is in a very real sense a fresh resurrection of Jesus, a bursting of the tombs in which the indifference, or the malice, or the ignorance of men had confined him. On such a great tapestry of history certain notable resurrections arrest the eye.

When the years bring forth the Reformation it is essentially a resurrection of Jesus which is worked into the picture. Out of the locked vaults of a great ecclesiastical prison, out of the oblivion where tradition had buried him, the Lord of Life emerged as truly as on the first resurrection morning. In the rediscovery of New Testament experience and truth men could see his face again. His quickening spirit created a new age.

Again in the evangelical revival of the eighteenth century Christ laid aside the grave-

clothes in which he had been interred in the formalism of a petrified religion. He walked out of the Gothic tomb and appeared in resurrection glory on the highroad of England as of old in Galilee. "He could not be holden" in the sepulcher of a dead creed. In hearts strangely warmed with the breath of life and on lips strangely touched with divine fire, Christ arose. He moved again among the multitudes and to as many as received him he gave the power to become the sons of God.

So in the great missionary passion which began to throb in the nineteenth century the universal Christ burst out of the prisons of isolation and provincialism into which the halting mind of man had cast him and stood revealed as the Saviour of the world. Again, with that new vision his disciples, as on the first Easter, broke into an apostolic leap and run to carry the glad news to the ends of the earth.

In the very days in which we live the freshened insight into the social message of Christianity, the emphasis on the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth has been a new resurrection of Jesus. There has appeared to the world a Jesus who says, "Nothing hu-

man is foreign to me"; a Jesus who has broken all bars which would separate him from the Lordship of all life—social, economic, and political. It is of that emerging Christ in our own time we would particularly think here.

Yet in our glimpse of the recurring resurrection let us not forget the nearest and most wonderful instance of all—the resurrection of Jesus as an experience of the individual soul. Easter is the eternal springtime of the human heart, when the living Christ becomes not only a historical fact but an individual experience. John Masefield, in *The Everlasting Mercy,* expresses this experience which has been repeated millions of times, in lines of beauty and power when the awakened and transformed Saul Kane exclaims:

"O glory of the lighted mind—
How dead I'd been, how dumb, how blind!
The running brook, to my new eyes,
Was babbling out of Paradise;
The waters rushing from the rain
Were singing, 'Christ has risen again.'"[1]

The "glory of the lighted mind"—that phrase expresses the supreme thrill of human expe-

[1] From *The Everlasting Mercy,* by John Masefield. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

rience. In that experience the soul discovers that Christ is not

"A dead fact
Stranded on the shores
Of the oblivious years."

The resurrection of Jesus is not only an event of history but a present experience, "warm, sweet, tender even yet." As warm, sweet, tender, and as real as this year's spring-time with all of its glory of pulsing life.

Let us lift up our eyes and our minds to the thrill of the fact that we ourselves are living in the dawn of an Easter morning. To-day Jesus Christ is coming out of every tomb in which men have laid him away, and is walking down the highways of life among men. Let us look at some of the sepulchers out of which the living Christ is breaking.

I

Christ is coming out of the tomb of the church and its creeds in which he has been interred. It is a strange thing to say that Christ has been laid away in the mausoleum of the church, and yet it is profoundly true. It is a very common thing to make mausoleums out

of churches. You go through cathedrals in Europe, and inside of the church you find that you are in a graveyard. You pass down the aisle and there are kings to the right of you, and kings to the left of you, all in their graves. It is all right to bury kings in a church. It is all right to bury most of them anywhere you get a chance, but a church or a cathedral is no place to bury Jesus Christ, because he ought not to be buried anywhere. But the face of the Master has been so often wrapped around with the winding sheets of philosophical and theological creeds that it has been hard to recognize him. As plain people have tried to find him amid the labyrinths of a theological maze, they have cried out, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

Dr. L. P. Jacks, in his book *Religious Perplexities,* has vividly expressed this entombment of vital Christianity:

"Christianity, in the official or authorized presentation of it, is a smothered religion; smothered almost to the point of total asphyxiation and collapse, but not quite; smothered by the vested interests of great institutions, and by the ambitions, fears and self-seekings

that such interests breed; smothered by the elaborate theological defenses that Christians have built, not against Antichrist, but against each other; smothered by anxieties, not unnatural in these embroilments, for its own future. If you take Christianity along with its entanglements, encumbrances, and unnatural alliances; if you present it with all the secular baggage which the ages have fastened upon it, you will then find it a hopelessly perplexing thing."[1]

The traditional figure of Christ has become almost as mummified as Tut-ankh-amen. While going through many of the great cathedrals of Mexico and Central America I have had an oppressive sense of the dead Christ. Again and again the eye would fall on the figure of the Master entombed in a glass case. There was everything to suggest the dead Christ; nothing to remind one of the living Lord. That feeling of the entombed Christ was stronger when we would step out of the cathedral into the streets swarming with people—people poorly clad, poorly fed, poorly taught. One could not help but think what

[1] From Religious Perplexities, by L. P. Jacks. Copyright, 1923, by the George H. Doran Company.

the living Lord would have done had he been there in the street. How he would have called to the children, with what wistfulness he would have looked out on the people as sheep without a shepherd! What a tragedy it was to inclose him as a wax figure in a glass tomb in a dark cathedral—the Christ who came that men might have life and have it abundantly! "Who will roll away the stone?" we inquired, "so that Jesus may come out among men for whom he lived and died and rose again?"

But it is not only in countries like Latin America but here in our very midst that Christ has been entombed in a church. The fact is none the less real even though the entombment has been unintentional and unrecognized. He has been imprisoned in a creed in which philosophical statements have been substituted for a living experience. He has been imprisoned in stained-glass windows, a beautiful figure rich in color but remote from life. He has been shut up in a book, venerated at a distance, but a book which remains an unexplored country to thousands of Christians who live very largely

> "As though Jesus had never lived,
> And as though he had never died."

He has been shut up in an organization. The mistaken minds of men have said: "The little area of life in this inclosure is religion. Here let Christ be confined. The wider circle where the busy movement of activity is going on is business and politics and pleasure. Do not let Christ get out where he has no business. Keep him shut up behind the fence of the institution which bears his name."

But to-day increasing multitudes are recognizing that there must be no forbidden city to the Son of man. He belongs everywhere. That new understanding of Jesus is the flush of a new Easter dawn.

Jesus is coming out of the restricted prison of the church and is moving into the midst of the thronging, throbbing life of men. We are realizing to-day that our God is the God of everything, or he is the God of nothing. Christ is not only the Christ of the church, but of the factory, the mine, the skyscraper, as well. We ought to remember that our faith is not one once delivered to theologians, but once delivered to the saints; that is, to people struggling with the problems of everyday life.

Easter Sunday a few years ago I saw an impressive procession coming out of the Cathe-

dral of Saint John the Divine in New York City, a procession of men in ecclesiastical gowns, singing Easter carols. But I can see just as clearly this morning a far more wonderful procession. It consists of just one figure, the towering figure of Jesus. He does not wear any flowing ecclesiastical robes, but is garbed in the garments of a work-a-day world. He is moving out from church into life. He walks down Broadway, up Main Street, across City Hall Square, going into every byway of life and bringing with him abundant life.

II

Jesus has been laid away in the mausoleum of the status quo *of the economic and social system.* Just as the privileged lords of Jerusalem, Pilate, Herod, and Caiaphas, sealed Jesus up in a tomb, so the grand dukes of the earth to-day have laid away Jesus where he cannot interfere with their business. That neat and orderly tomb has been frequently called, without a trace of sarcasm, "Christian civilization." Everything was much safer for the powers in Jerusalem with Jesus safely buried. The soldiers were told: "This tomb

must never be opened. Make it as sure as you can." It was so much easier to get away with the loot when Jesus was sealed up. He was a rude disturber. His enemies understood him perfectly. The National Civic Federation of Palestine, and the Jerusalem Defense Society, and the Security League of Judæa all had their spies watching him. These spies had their reports ready. "He stirreth up the people," they reported. They were right. So they buried Jesus.

The privileged orders to-day regard Jesus in much the same way. They say: "This man is dangerous. Keep the tomb closed. Make it your business to see that Jesus never gets really loose in the world." For hundreds of years men have been trying to keep him buried. They say to the ministers of Christ: "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther. You preach the simple gospel and keep away from business and politics. Talk as sweetly as you want to about mother, home, and heaven, but don't dare to talk about the twelve-hour day in industry, about stock dividends or profit-sharing, about anything that will disturb the *status quo*."

But Jesus cannot be shut in any tomb. He

has burst out of the mausoleum and is abroad in the world to-day. "He stirreth up the people."

I saw a perfect picture the other day of what men have tried to do with Jesus. Coming across the State of West Virginia I saw a wonderful line of peach blossoms that seemed to gird the whole State like a pink ribbon, but here and there amid the scenes of beauty were drab and ugly mining towns, products of the amazing genius which American capitalism shows for sheer ugliness. I never felt so strongly the truth of the old missionary hymn,

> "Where every prospect pleases,
> And only man is vile."

In one town right up against a long row of mine openings there was a pathetic little cemetery that seemed to picture the fact that men have buried Jesus alongside of their industrial civilization. The industrial civilization in that particular form as a great brute that mangles and blights human life can survive only as long as the spirit of Jesus is shut up in a tomb. When he comes out, the forces that prey on humanity are doomed.

Thank God, the tomb of Jesus is opened;

he is going into our complex life to-day, into the steel mill, into the sweatshop, into the coal mine, into the slum, into the cotton mill, and is demanding, "Let my people go. I am come that they might have life, and have it abundantly."

III

The resurrection of Jesus was the climax of a conflict between Jesus and the military power of his time. From that clash Jesus emerged victorious. The struggle between Jesus and militarism has never been sharper than it is to-day. The emerging Christ from the tomb over which the military power of Rome stood guard is a picture of the new grasp of the mind of Christ on war which has come to the church in the last few years. It is a stirring prophecy of the future.

Never were material and spiritual powers locked in such a momentous contest as in the resurrection of Jesus. The unconquerable power of Rome was pitted against an unknown force. Rome as represented in Pilate and the official military forces had a disturbing sense of something new. Rome had met all sorts of adversaries and had developed an efficient

technique in dealing with each kind. But there was nothing in the drill regulations which explained how to deal with Jesus. There was an elusive, uncanny quality about him which Pilate felt and feared but could not define.

"Make it as sure as you can." These instructions were solemnly given to the soldiers. "Double the guard at the entrance; picket the whole neighborhood. Make it certain that the tomb in which Jesus is buried shall stay forever closed with an armed soldier standing over it."

"But up from the grave he arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er his foes."

The military powers first resisted, then fled, and then very characteristically lied about the whole thing. That has been the unfailing technique of militarism ever since.

"Make it as sure as you can"—how well the words fit the militarism of our time! Just as Pilate and Herod and all their crowd realized that Jesus alive was, in some way which they did not clearly understand, fatal to their whole system, so the war lords of our time, the militarists, the jingoists, the professional

patriots in every country realize that Jesus is a deadly enemy of the whole militaristic cult, of the whole ancient philosophy of brute force.

"Make it as sure as you can," they cry today. "Use every method that comes to hand to discredit the Christian teaching on war. Play upon the fears of people. Misrepresent the position of those who are in earnest in working for peace. Slander them. Invent every ugly name you can think of. For the tomb of Christ must never be opened."

In a fresh dawn that tomb is opening and a living Christ is coming out. Men have seen the exploded lies of the war-makers. They have seen the worn-out speeches and arguments punctured. They have seen and felt the will to peace strengthen and increase. The Church of Christ is addressing this newly appreciated Jesus in the same word that came to the lips of Mary as she saw him the first Easter morning, "Master!" And the Master is strengthening the courage and hope of his disciples by his words, "I will go before you in the struggle against hate, greed, suspicion, blindness—all the forces of hell which create wars."

Let us never forget that Easter is a great

birthday of hope and comfort for the individual. But also let us remember that it is also a warning to every evil power that preys on mankind that Jesus is alive again. Sometimes on the bulletin boards of post offices we see pictured the face of a man who has escaped from jail with this warning: "Dangerous Man at Large." In a very true sense the message of Easter to the world is just this: "The most dangerous Man in the world is at large." Jesus Christ has broken jail. "He could not be holden." He is moving up and down the world, in and out of the heaarts of men, inciting them to revolt against the long tyranny of the heel of power. He is again at his old business of stirring up the people so that the lords of night and evil may be swept from the earth.

It will be a long struggle. But the end is as sure as the end of that long, dark night which preceded the first Easter. For in the mind and heart of the world to-day in a new and a profound sense Jesus Christ is alive.

V

THE DEAD LINE

"Thou hast a name that thou liveth, and art dead."—*Revelation 3. 1.*

Mark Twain once described a man as so irreverent that he had even been known to speak disrespectfully of the equator. There is another line, however, never exactly charted but not imaginary, about which no one will speak with disrespect. It is the Dead Line. It is a true International Date Line. For it is the line between Yesterday and To-morrow. On this side of it is to-morrow. We face toward the future. When we cross it we face toward Yesterday. Like the imaginary lines of the ocean we cross it unconsciously. It does not advertise itself; it has no outward sign whereby we may know it. But it marks a real division in the voyage of life. Out beyond the immediate horizon it waits for us all, a fearsome, mysterious thing. To chart our voyage so that we avoid the Dead Line is a major achievement of seamanship.

The phrase "the Dead Line" is most frequently used in connection with professional life. It stands for that point at which the teacher, the preacher, the physician, any professional man or woman, stops advancing and loses competence. We are not particularly, or at least primarily, concerned at present with that phase of the subject. We hasten to say, however, that on that matter a deal of pretentious and pernicious nonsense has been spoken and written. People have talked about the Dead Line as though it were an arbitrary point of time inevitably fixed. Sometimes it is put at fifty years of age, sometimes sixty, sometimes seventy; sometimes, incredibly, before fifty. This mechanical fixing of an age limit to personal power has worked much harm. It has as much sense to it as the decision of a fussy efficiency expert would have if he decided that all the elm trees over fifty years of age had outlived their usefulness and must be cut down forthwith. The church in particular has suffered beyond measure through the shortsighted and foolish policy pursued by some churches in rejecting men in middle years and beyond, just at the time when matured mental power, experience, and

character fit them for the finest pastoral service. Some men *do* cross the Dead Line at fifty. Some cross it at thirty; some at twenty. Some are born across it! It is not a matter of years but of the power of fresh growth, expansion, aspiration, adventure, flexibility of mind. It is a line which runs across the world of the spirit.

Our text suggests the Dead Line that crosses all life, not merely the lives of a particular class of workers. It glimpses the great problem of keeping life fresh, moving, growing, alive! That problem is a real one which calls for unceasing wakefulness. There is a point in many lives which corresponds to the first frost of the autumn. That coating of hoar-frost which appears some October or November morning is the dead line for plants. There is a nipping frost in human life which lays waste its powers and checks its advances in the same manner. It is not the result of an outside force, such as is the frost which chills the dahlia and chrysanthemum to death. It is an inner cause, the result of the mental and spiritual climate which we make for ourselves. We cannot blame the weather.

Broadly speaking, we cross the Dead Line

when we cease to grow. "Go on or go under" is a law of nature which has never been repealed. The mind and spirit is just as amenable to it as plant life. That idea of the Dead Line, of course, is common and obvious. Let us try to explore it a bit in detail, in order that we may see more clearly the forces which expand and enlarge life and keep it fresh, and also the petrifying forces, noiseless, insidious, and constant, which tend to push us across the Dead Line.

The alternative which confronts us is very well put by the Frenchman, Remy de Gourmont, when writing of Egypt. "The greatest collective suicide," he says, "was Egypt's, a people which preferred to endure as mummy, rather than to prolong as empire." Mummy or empire—that is life's terrible choice for each of us.

1. The true epitaph to be written over many a promising mind and spirit would be: *Killed by routine.* Routine seems to secrete a shell which forms about the mind and spirit of the one who gets completely in its power. In a letter written while he was Secretary of the Department of the Interior, Franklin K. Lane said that in the departments at Washington

it took just about seven years for the nerve of initiative and imagination to atrophy. They will atrophy like any other nerve, when bound in the plaster cast of an inflexible routine. There are many things besides poverty which freeze the genial current of the soul, says Oliver Wendell Holmes. Routine is one of the surest of them. The only escape for the spirit is exactly that of the body confronting a zero temperature. Life depends on violent exercise. Only by swinging our arms and stamping our feet is the blood kept coursing through the veins and life preserved. So the imagination and initiative are saved only by vigorous use. The damage done by routine to the spirit does not come merely through regular and repeated activity. No fruitful contribution to life is ever made without concentration and the acquirement of skill. The real calamity is an avoidable one—the numbing of the faculty of surprise and wonder. It is in the loss of expectancy, the childlike heart to which the world is still full of a number of things which make it leap up. What a vivid flashlight of a heart which has crossed the Dead Line Stevenson has given us in his familiar verses—

"If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books and my food, and summer rain,
Knock on my sullen heart in vain."[1]

The vain knock of every-day wonders at a dulled and sullen heart is the announcement of Doom's Day. When curiosity dies, when eagerness has gone, when the whole pageant of nature and history in the making becomes a twice-told tale vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man, then we have crossed the fateful line into the Never Never Land, "Never glad confident morning again." The suffocation of the divine sense of enchantment and romance at the hands of an unimaginative acceptance of routine has been pictured with effective artistry by Edmund Leamy in his poem "The Ticket Agent":

"Like any merchant in a store
Who sells things by the pound or score,

"He deals with scarce perfunctory glance
Small pass-keys to the world's Romance.

"He takes dull money, turns and hands
The roadways to far distant lands.

[1] From "Celestial Surgeon," by Robert Louis Stevenson. Reprinted by permission Charles Scribner's Sons.

"Bright shining rail and fenceless sea
Are partners to his wizardry.

"He calls off names as if they were
Just names to cause no heart to stir.

"For listening you'll hear him say
'. . . and then to Aden and Bombay . . .'

"Or '. . . 'Frisco first and then to Nome,
Across the Rocky Mountains—Home . . .'

"And never catch of voice to tell
He knows the lure or feels the spell.

"Like any salesman in a store,
He sells but tickets—nothing more.

"And casual as any clerk
He deals in dreams, and calls it—work!"[1]

How often we treat the gleaming wonders of the spiritual world in much the same dead fashion—"like any salesman in a store"! Pass-keys to the world's romance, names that should cause the heart to stir—"Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace," we can rattle off with no catch in the voice to reveal that we are thrilled by the sheer wonder that God has ever called us out of our darkness into his

[1] Reprinted by permission *Harper's Magozine*, 1923, and Edmund Leamy.

marvelous light. "We need to train ourselves," says Father Bull, "in that aspect of faith, to have that buoyant expectancy of the improbable which refuses the dull estimates of common sense and joyfully expects in the future what is not suggested by the experience of the past." When that is preserved, life is preserved. And life, extended beyond any measure of three score and ten, may still be a wild, eager ride with high heart beating and lighted eyes searching the horizon.

"So with the wan waste grasses on my spear,
I ride forever seeking after God.
My hair grows whiter than my thistle plume
And all my limbs are loose; but in my eyes
The star of an unconquerable praise;
For in my soul one hope forever sings,
That at the next white corner of the road
My eyes may look on Him."[1]

2. We cross a definite Dead Line when *dissatisfaction gives way to a dormant content.* There is a preserving stir of life when we are at odds with the world and are restlessly seeking, no matter how quixotically, to remold it to our heart's desire. When we have our eyes

[1] From "Wild Knight," by G. K. Chesterton. Reprinted by permission E. P. Dutton & Company.

on a goal, an ideal, far perhaps, but shining, and have not been overtaken by the dark nightfall of "What's the use?" we live. Painfully perhaps, wearied no doubt, yet there is no call to use the stethoscope—we are alive. It is when we stop sailing the seas scouting for pirates and privateers, and drop anchor into some Sailor's Snug Harbor and haul down the belligerent flag that our real history ceases. The rest of existence can be covered by one sentence in the obituary: "Mr. X retired twenty years ago."

In this sense W. L. George's saying is true: "Life is like a pudding; the more you stir it the better it is." Truly orthodox Christianity is always adventure. That is one reason why it is the spirit of perpetual youth. It goes on making new discoveries, waging new wars for the liberation of the whole family of God—the life which is life indeed. There is a very suggestive phrase used in connection with the Methodist ministry—"taking a supernumerary relation." It describes one who is "above the number" listed in the active ranks, an extra, out of the combat, for one reason or another. We take a supernumerary relation to the whole forward enterprise of life when

indignation dies and we conclude a separate peace with the powers and principalities of evil and sink back to a limp and beaten content. Louise Imogen Guiney, poet, essayist, and recluse, well expressed the creed of a supernumerary in her words, "The main business of the scholar is to live gracefully, without mental passion, and to get off alone into a corner for an affectionate view of creation." Take that Lilliputian view of life and stretch it alongside of Jesus' definition of life—"He that loseth his life shall find it"! It is like measuring a doll's house beside the universe.

3. *Materialism is a swelling "trade wind" which pushes us across the Dead Line* unless there is a strong hand at the helm. When the foolish dreams of youth are overtaken by a middle-aged "sanity," with a clear, keen eye for the main chance, when idealism gives way to the "practical," then we have reached the stopping place of life, in the high New Testament sense, and the conductor calls out, "This is as far as we go."

> "The heathen in his blindness
> Bows down to wood and stone"

in New York as well as in Benares, in Chicago

as well as in Foochow. For the blind passion for things wears down the soul as tuberculosis eats away the tissues of the body. A keen observer has pictured the things which make up the table of contents of life for a large number of Americans: "Automobiles and radios, buildings and bathrooms, furs and furniture, liners, hotels, and bridges, vacuum cleaners, cameras, bus lines, electric toasters, moving pictures, railway cars, package foods, telephones, pianos, novels, comic supplements."

Whatever pertains to the soul must be crowded into an appendix at the end as an afterthought, if there is any room in the already crowded volume. The result is that life is more like a Sears Roebuck catalogue than a Golden Treasury. N. P. Barbellion wrote toward the end of that singularly brave and pathetic journal called *Last Diary,* "If I were to sum up my life in one word I should say *suffocation.*" In a very different sense than the one in which he used it suffocation would be the fitting entry at the end of the record of many souls. Not at the actual end of life but at the point where practical materialism overtook them and suffocated the life of the spirit, as completely as though the

Woolworth Tower had fallen down on them. That figure of speech is not so far out of the way. For what has happened to a great many people whose spiritual faculties have deadened is that a great Five-and-Ten-Cent Store full of cheap and "practical" gimcracks has caved in on them and buried them in the débris.

"He who has lost soul's liberty
Concerns himself forever with his property,
As when the folk have lost the dance and song,
Women clean useless pots the whole day long."

In the fairy stories the climax which always made shivers run down our backs was when the ogre transformed a person into an inanimate object. I still believe in fairies, at least in ogres. For I have seen the black wand of materialism waved in the air and a growing soul transformed into the inglorious stage-setting of modern life—a piece of overstuffed furniture.

4. *Self-satisfaction is an obvious Dead Line.* It is as clearly marked as the timber line on the mountains. "No growth beyond the point" is clearly marked at the spot where complacency sets in. When we stop to admire

ourselves we congeal. Jesus waged continual war against self-satisfaction as the arch enemy of growth. His picture of the Pharisee at prayer is a perfect demonstration. The Pharisee could no more hear anything that God had to say or say anything that God could hear than could a mummy in a glass case. That is always the penalty of self-satisfied egotism; it creates a spiritual vacuum in which all development ceases. In one of the letters of Grover Cleveland, given in his biography by McElroy, there is a shrewd observation on his intimate friend, Joseph Jefferson. He wonders whether the satisfaction with his rôle of Rip Van Winkle and the weakness whereby he liked to be the only person of consequence in his plays, did not prevent Jefferson from undertaking the really great dramas and thus developing into a greater artist. Self-satisfaction always prevents us from essaying the really great dramas of life which call for humility, toil, and pain. The little accomplishments in which we have become (to our own view) letter perfect are so much easier. The sweet salvos of applause which they win become a necessary drug—and, in a word, we have reached our terminal.

In the life of the spirit when the hunger and thirst after righteousness, inspired by aspiration to a lofty ideal of character, give way to a consciousness of petty superiorities to others, the soul is no longer a garden of God where the fruits of the spirit grow. It has become a cemetery.

5. *When intellectual life petrifies, we have the name of being alive but are dead.* "Wisdom," says Emerson, "consists in keeping the mind liquid or in resisting the tendency to too rapid petrification." What a labor of Hercules—to keep the mind liquid! A United States senator once remarked that God Almighty could not make him change his mind on our Latin-American policy. That was probably true. "Is God limited?" is a question frequently asked. In a case like that he must be sadly limited! The senator's mind was not in a liquid state. It was as finished, on that particular question, as concrete which has been poured into a mold and set.

To keep on this side of the Dead Line, we must keep the mind accessible to fresh facts and forces which insure growth. The contents of the mind must be fluid enough to be penetrated with new ingredients, as the mass

of dough is quickened with yeast. Mark Rutherford in the *Autobiography* paints an unforgettable picture of the opposite of this condition in his description of Wollaston, "His ideas, acquired long ago, had never fructified in him, but were like hard stones which rattled in his pocket." That rattle of hard, inflexible, finished ideas may very truthfully be called the "death rattle."

6. *Not to labor the point at all, not even the hastiest glimpse in the direction of the Dead Line could be taken without reporting that with the blunting of the sympathies we cross from life into death.* There are in the calendar of the Anglican Church days designated by a name which has haunting suggestiveness—"Ember Days." There are also in the universal calendar of the human heart Ember Days. They are the lengthening days of autumn when the fires of the heart have sunk to embers; when the kindling glow of warm, tender sympathies dies down and a chill steals through the empty rooms of the house. The guests, dismissed with the poor courtesy of calloused indifference, creep away one by one. The lights blink out. The feast of life is over. A lonesome, selfish vigil by a dying fire is its poor

substitute. Ember Days! God grant you may never see them!

"For God's sake do not forbid the years to teach you tenderness," wrote Barrett Wendell, during his last days, in a letter to a friend. What deeper, truer wisdom did anyone ever gather from the pilgrimage of life?

There is but one sure escape from the Dead Line. It is expressed in the words of an old gospel hymn—"Throw Out the Life Line." Christ is the life preserver of the spirit, not in any narrow sense, but in the limitless sense of the Redeemer of life from every force that withers and deadens its powers. To share with Christ his fellowship with the Father will keep the years lit up with a fresh wonder. To share with Christ his fellowship with men, his sensitive sympathy to every human need and appeal, will keep the heart warm and pulsing with the life blood of the soul—love. As we look out on life through his eyes we shall learn the things that are most worth while, the inner treasures which do not rust or mold, but which are the very fountain of perpetual youth, a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

VI

SHUN GENEALOGIES

"Shun genealogies."—*Titus 3. 9.*

One of the many strange and unexpected by-products of the war has been a revival of interest in genealogy. Up until a few years ago the science of genealogy seemed to have fallen on evil days with few so poor to do it reverence. Of course it was to be expected that New England should cling to its reputed passion for its favorite tree, the family tree. The Boston Transcript has continued through the years in its page of genealogical researches. Eager souls have sought to prove their title clear to be numbered among the Mayflower descendants. But the average man's knowledge of his own genealogy or interest in it did not reach back beyond his grandparents.

It is probably true that such is still the case. But the stimulation of the growth of the patriotic societies during the war, and the necessity

for a pedigree of patriots as a condition of entrance, together with rich persons who can afford to have their ancestors traced, has kept genealogists busy, as every museum and public library can testify.

Yet the American public does not seem to be in any dire need of an emphasis of Paul's warning to "shun genealogies." We are still a young nation, not far beyond the pioneer period. Our descendants give us far more concern than our ancestors. There is also in most people a somewhat cautious feeling that their ancestry may be a sort of mysterious Pandora's box of which it is just as well to keep the lid fastened down. John G. Saxe has expressed this feeling with disconcerting candor in his warning to the would-be ancestor worshiper:

"Depend upon it, my snobbish friend,
Your family thread you can't ascend,
Without good reason to apprehend
You may find it waxed at the farther end
By some plebeian vocation!
Or, worse than that, your boasted line
May end in a loop of a stronger twine,
That plagued some worthy relation!"[1]

[1] From *The Proud Miss McBride*, by John G. Saxe. Reprinted by permission Houghton Mifflin Company.

Yet in spite of this, it is no exaggeration to say that these words of Paul's, "shun genealogies," in their largest and far-reaching sense, contain one of the most important messages which could come to our time. Its command to us is, "Eyes front!" It pleads for the prophetic as against the antiquarian conception of life. H. G. Wells records the conversation of two men standing in the Coliseum at Rome:

"Think of the men who have stood here," said one.

"Think of the men who will," said the other. And in these remarks the conflicting views of life, one facing the past, the other facing the future, stood ranged.

This sermon may be put into one sentence, on which all else is commentary: *The important question to ask of anything is not, "Where did it come from?" but "Now that it is here what can it do?"* The substitution of the first question for the second is one of the world's chief obstacles to progress. An old slander (a slander because it was only partially true) on the Eastern section of the United States used to be the statement that in New England and Philadelphia the question always asked

of one, as a basis of social rating, was, "Who was your grandfather?" while in the West the only question was, "What can you do?" The contrast between those two questions at any rate is an enlargement of Paul's "Shun genealogies." You can make your test of any section of truth, of any theory, of any personality, the question, "What is its ancestry?" And you can reject or accept it on the ground of its antecedents and descent. Thus, a great many people choose their guiding principles of life simply on the superficial and, in the literal sense of the word, *impertinent* ground of how it got here. Or you can look squarely at the actual thing itself, whether a belief, a tradition, a theory, or a person, and ask the vital question, "What is its worth, its real truth, its capacity to serve?"

Ask any radio fan what is the chief trouble with the world and his answer will be, "Too much static!" Ask most any philosopher the same question and his answer will be exactly the same. Too much *static* in our world: too much hard, lifeless rigidity; too many theories, traditions, philosophies, creeds, which have "set" like brittle concrete, making them incapable of adequately leading or fitting a

world which is dynamic, changing, moving, in which new forces are in play and which must be taken account of—in the large sense of our text, too much genealogy. The question where we came from has its importance. The question where we are going to has vastly more. The first question is one far more safe to ask and pursue. This distinction is very cleverly portrayed in a recent story from Africa. A Manchester business man paid a visit to a planter friend in Uganda who was a keen sportsman. Not without considerable misgiving the visitor allowed himself to be prevailed upon to go lion hunting.

His first night in the jungle was a sleepless one. Next morning the two friends started out early, and had gone but a short distance when they came upon fresh tracks which the enthusiastic sportsman with the most evident enthusiasm identified as being those of a full-grown lion.

"Tell you what we had better do," said the Manchester man, brightly. "You go ahead and see where he went, and I'll go back and see where he came from!"

"I'll see where he came from," is always the cautious choice of the genealogist. "I'll fol-

low the trail into the past where no dangerous real-life issue will spring out on me!"

Let us try to face some responsibilities of our day in the light of that shaft of truth thrown on our time by President W. H. P. Faunce in his statement: "The nineteenth century dealt in origins. The twentieth century must deal in goals."

I

Genealogies are to be shunned when they are expressed in the domination of *warped and pedantic loyalties.* Blind adherence to obsolete tradition and refusal to accept any truth which does not bear the hall mark of origin with our particular school of political or social allegiance, puts us into the class of the occasional pet dog or cat, which will not eat anything except from its own accustomed plate. It may be the best food in the world, but unless it is set on its own sanctified plate with a special fringe around it, the food will go untouched.

"Cease to be ruled by dogmas and authorities, *look at the world!*" cried Roger Bacon, the Franciscan friar-scientist, seven hundred years ago. "Shun genealogies—look

at the world," is as necessary a watchword to-day as it was in that renaissance of science which Roger Bacon ushered in. When our eyes are all for labels which have been pasted on to things and not on the thing itself, we perpetuate a *status quo* which sets like a strait-jacket on a growing world.

In politics the man who asks of any and every measure the one question, Is it a Republican measure, or a Democratic bill? without any penetration of the merits of the thing itself, may answer voluntarily to the name of statesman, but in truth he is an arid genealogist. His statesmanship consists in deciding great questions of human welfare by an arbitrary and meaningless test. We have been treated during the last six years in our own Congress to the amazing spectacle of men doing that very thing—deciding their attitude, and their nation's decision, regarding the problems of world rebuilding and world peace by asking the one question, "Who proposed the thing? Did it come from one of our gang? What is its genealogy?" On that truly insane hand of partisanship the needs of our time cry out, "For God's sake, for humanity's sake, shun genealogies. *Look at the world!*" For

this preoccupation with labels and origins, with all its roots in the past, becomes a decayed growth, nourishing a few moldy leaves on a monstrous network of memories, timidities and restraints. This incessant over-the-shoulder look at past traditions was well satirized by the historian Seeley, when he said, "Whenever I hear a man say 'History teaches us,' I say to myself, 'That man is going to tell a lie,' and he always does." All party labels and catch words in a changing world ought to have attached to them the warning frequently printed on medicine bottles—"Good for only six months."

A visitor to New York city a few months ago refused the proffer of the aid of a relative in showing him about the city, saying he always got along perfectly in any strange city by purchasing a guide book. So he stopped at a newsstand in the Grand Central Station and bought a book on display there, *Valentine's Manual of New York,* and stepped out on Forty-second Street to begin explorations. So far all was well. *Valentine's Manual,* however, happened to be a reprint of a quaint and delightful description of New York, originally published about 1860, when the

spot on which he was dodging taxicabs was an uninhabited marsh. He had a valuable genealogy of New York. But it wasn't much help in getting to Wall Street. Yet that man was a fair picture of United States senators trying to find their way about in the present international situation with nothing to go by but an expurgated and blurred copy of Washington's Farewell Address.

Economic and social questions also defy solution by the application of genealogy. Any new proposal in these realms is subjected by many minds to the one handy test—"Where did it come from? If it did not grow on their particular family tree, away with it! It is easy to be seen that it is either Socialism or Bolshevism." We used to hear of the lady who comforted herself with "that blessed word 'Mesopotamia'!" The blessed word to the genealogist of the economic variety to-day is one with a more modern accent. It is the blessed word Socialism. It is an easy and convenient epithet with which to damn anything, all the way from the effort to organize world peace to the effort to rid the nation of the evils of child labor. One of our deepest needs is to replace this attitude by an open

mind ready to seek true wisdom wherever it may be found.

II

"Shun genealogies" is a timely word of guidance in what is probably the largest and most dangerous problem of our time—the race question. For in the tangled and complex issues of race relationship, race conflict and prejudice there has been a fanatical revival of interest in genealogy. There is unquestionably a rising tide of racial feeling which threatens to flood the world with strife. Walls of exclusion have been raised by race pride, prejudice, and antipathy. Strange and weird theories of race origin and superiority have been evolved, distorted, and manufactured out of the whole cloth, to accelerate the growth of racial snobbishness. One of the most time-honored and oft-repeated jokes that ever appeared in Punch might well serve as a picture of the present recrudescence of race prejudice:

"Who is 'im?" asks one workman of another, pointing to a stranger across the street.

"I don't know," was the answer. "'Im ain't none of us. 'Eave a brick at 'im!"

And the bricks have been flying through the

air—international bricks heaved across the seas, and bricks heaved locally about the community.

The intricate problems of race cannot be solved in a few paragraphs. They cannot even be stated in a thousand paragraphs. But one thing can be stated positively and dogmatically in a few words. The race problem will never be solved if we approach it from the standpoint of genealogy, if our attitude is that of one-hundred-per-cent blond Nordic superiority and supremacy, if we ask of the man of any race, "Where did he come from?" and not "What is he worth as a human being, and how can we best live in harmony with him and together make a better world?"

Most theories of race superiority have just this much natural basis—that the giraffe must think that the dachshund is a very queer-looking animal!

Shun genealogies, is God's commanding word to all fomentors of race hatred, injustice, and ill will; to all complacent hundred-per-centers of any sort; to all night-riding bullies in white robes and hoods, prostituting the sacred symbol of the Cross to the very purposes of hell, sowing the seeds of hatred. Race

differences exist. Amalgamation is no way out of the problem. A weak sentimentalism brings no solution, but a virile spirit of brotherhood which brings both respect and determined good will to every race contact will find the way out. Underneath all separate race genealogies is the one genealogy that finally signifies—the family tree of the one great family of the sons of God.

III

Preoccupation with genealogy vitiates the power of religion. For genealogy is the specialty of the separatist. It is the specialty of the snob, and of all types of snobs—the religious snob is the worst; naturally, for the worst evils are always corruptions of the finest qualities of character. The snobbish separatist, eternally spading around the roots of his sectarian or denominational family tree, intent on the minutiæ which divide him off from collateral branches of God's family, to the obscuring of the great common inheritance of the saints in Christ, is a belated antiquarian, a chief stumbling-block to the progress of the Kingdom.

Religion in many quarters to-day is suffer-

ing from a common but malignant affliction—too much history. Our text is an expression of that other divine counsel of Paul's, to "forget the things that are behind." History becomes a curse when the antiquarian strangles the prophet. The temple of the living God is violated and transformed into an arsenal of obsolete weapons, sixteenth-century poison daggers and eighteenth-century blunderbusses. That is always the result of the backward look which scrutinizes the genealogy of an idea and never applies to it the test of actual permanent worth. A professor, finding himself seated beside a young lady at a dinner party, searched about for a topic of conversation and finally ventured, "Are you interested in history?"

"No," was her ready answer. "I always think it is the best plan to let bygones be bygones."

We may smile at her conception of history, but in some respects there was high wisdom in the answer. If the Church of Christ could only let a few more bygones be bygones, and hear its Master's command, "Face front!" it could *make* history instead of merely reading it, by assaulting victoriously some of the

strongholds of night and evil which will never fall except before a gloriously united attack.

Present acrimonious controversies are Balkanizing the churches. What a distressing spectacle when men ask concerning religious truth only the questions, "Did it come by way of the Westminster Confession?" or, "Which one of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion is it?" or, "Did John Wesley ever say it? If so, show me where, on what page in his printed sermons, edition of 1832." So men shrink from to-day's revelation of the Spirit, insisting, like legalistic Shylocks, "It is not nominated in the bond!" What matters if it came hot from the flaming heart of Jesus if it bear not their own peculiar patent mark? A Socialist leader has been recently giving to his party a heart-searching lecture on "Why Radical Movements Fail." He pessimistically said that there is an inherent ineffectualness in all radical movements. This impotence he laid to dissensions within all radical organizations, which split them into smaller and smaller branches, bickering with one another until the primary goal is lost.

Let those last words sink in a bit—*until the*

primary goal is lost. How much Christian history could be sorrowfully gathered under that tragic heading? Is it not true of the greatest radical movement of all history—the revolutionary radicalism of Jesus, content with nothing less than a social order founded on love? For the primary goal of Christianity is to nourish the life of God in the soul of man and the soul of the world. Nothing can raise quite so dense a fog to obscure that goal as the bickerings of controversy. Kipling has described this attitude in words that sear and burn:

"We shall peck out and discuss and dissect, and evert and extrude to our mind,
The flaccid tissues of long-dead issues offensive to God and mankind
(Precisely like vultures over an ox that the Army has left behind)."[1]

"Ye make void the word of God through your tradition," Jesus proclaimed to some genealogical fanatics of his own time. May we not hear his voice proclaiming again to-day, "Shun genealogies and set your heart perfectly on the great hope of making the king-

[1] From "Old Men," by Rudyard Kipling. Reprinted by permission of the author.

doms of this world the kingdoms of our God and his Christ?" Emerson says pertinently to this whole matter (would that the truth might be pondered by every sectarian!): "It is not by running after Napoleon [and we might substitute Calvin or Luther or Wesley or any one of the founding fathers] that the corresponding element, the Napoleonism in you, is stimulated and matured, but by withdrawing from him, from all, back on the deep of home." "The deep of home"—"From God, who is our home"—to quote from that unifying, universal genealogy traced by Wordsworth in "The Intimations of Immortality."

Launch out anew into those deeps—the great, timeless, universal, spiritual essentials which were the main emphasis of Jesus. So shall we lift the Church of Christ into a new age of power.

"What care I for caste or creed?
It is the deed, it is the deed.
What for class, or what for clan?
It is the man, it is the man.
Heirs of love, and joy, and woe,
Who is high, and who is low?
Mountain, valley, sky, and sea
Are for all humanity.

"What care I for robe or stole?
It is the soul, it is the soul.
What for crown, or what for crest?
It is the heart within the breast;
It is the faith, it is the hope,
It is the struggle up the slope.
It is the brain and eye to see
One God, and one humanity."

VII

SIX WAYS TO GET OFF THE EARTH

"Caught up to the heavens."—*2 Corinthians 12. 2.*

One of the most sparkling passages of poetry in *Cyrano de Bergerac* is the extravagant and fantastic description given by Cyrano of the six ways in which he made a trip to the moon. The passage forms one of the many tense situations of that great romantic drama. By telling this preposterous story Cyrano delays the Duke De Guiche in his search for Roxane. Like the Ancient Mariner he holds him with his glittering eye and insane eloquence:

Cyrano: The ether clings to me. I've traveled far!
My eyes are filled with star-dust. On my spurs
I still have shreds torn from a planet's hide!
See, on my doublet, there's a comet's hair!

Six ways did I devise to violate
The virgin Azure!

De Guiche: Six.
Cyrano: I deck my body,
Naked as on the day that I was born,
With crystal phials filled up to the brim,
With tears dropped from the morning sky, and then
Expose me to the full blaze of the sun,
Which draws me up the while it drinks the dew.[1]

So with the unbridled fancies of a poet's imagination Cyrano describes six magical trips to the moon, concluding with a masterpiece:

Cyrano: Finally,
Placing myself upon a plate of iron,
I take a magnet, and throw it in the air!
'Tis a good way—the iron rushes on
Fast as the magnet flies, and follows after.
Again I throw the magnet—there you are!
In this way I ascend without a limit.
De Guiche: Six! These be six good ways.

We have recalled these stellar flights of Cyrano, not for any fanciful purpose, but for an immensely practical one. For this description of six ways to make a trip to the

[1] From Cyrano de Bergerac, by Edmond Rostand. Lamson, Wolffe & Company, Boston.

moon suggests a parallel theme which comes close home to every day's practical needs: Six ways to get off the earth.

For the art of getting off the earth is a tremendously important one. Unless we have mastered it in some of its many branches, at least, all the other skills we may have acquired will be unavailing to bring us into the highest and richest experiences of life. Unless we encounter experiences which in a real sense of the word carry us out of ourselves, give the wings of ecstasy to our spirits, make us forget the all too solid earth and be lifted up into the heavens, life becomes hopelessly and insufferably pedestrian. We are in the sad plight of an eagle which has never learned to rise into the sky with the beat of his wings, but walks on the ground when he might soar sunward.

> "Take all away from me
> But leave me ecstasy,
> And I am richer then
> Than all my fellow-men."[1]

So sings Emily Dickinson. And she sees truly. For the ecstasy of an uplifting expe-

[1] From *Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson.* Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Company.

rience gives wings to the soul by which it gets off the earth.

For one thing, we will all have to get off the earth some time. Our leasehold will expire. Moving day will inevitably appear on the calendar. That final and inexorable summons, "Get off the earth," will come as a shock unless we have had some practice in doing it. The only practice we can get is to learn to live by the spirit here and now—by the use of our spiritual faculties which rise above the material basis of life and escape from the chains of things.

When the history of a soul can be largely written in terms of things which happened *outside* of it, instead of *in* it, that soul is earthbound, shackled. It is tethered to things. The round ball of earth becomes in a true sense its ball and chain! But the man whose history is essentially that of a mind and spirit, who has experienced the great red-letter days of the soul's calendar, who has felt the splendor of a sudden thought, who has felt thrilled with the exaltation of a great spiritual aspiration, who has entered into the nobility of an unselfish love—that man has learned to get off the earth. When we say that, we are not mad

but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

A large part of the pleasure of staying on the earth is in knowing how to get off. That makes it a point of departure instead of a prison. Like the bird in Hugo's poem, which, on the swaying bough, sings on unaffrighted, knowing that he has wings, the soul which has learned to measure life by spiritual intensity is serene in any situation, for it knows that life consisteth not in an abundance of things but in the quality and powers of the spirit.

It is a stirring sight to see an aeroplane leave the ground. For a hundred yards or more it will run along the earth, then the wings will tilt upward, an exclamation of "There she goes!" will come from the crowd and the machine will lift into the sky. There are many things which will bring the same experience into our life, if we know how to use them. Running along on our well-grooved track, in apparently humdrum fashion, a moment of fresh insight, the surge of a great emotion, a quickening experience of the soul, will tilt the wings skyward and we get off the earth. We are caught up into the heavens.

Six ways to get off the earth! Taking ar-

bitrarily that number from the fertile imagination of Cyrano, let us think, very sketchily, necessarily, of the art of getting off the earth, of opening the mind and heart to the forces which lift us out of selfish and earth-bound preoccupation.

1. *Books* give wings to the mind.

> "There is no frigate like a book
> To take us miles away."

That man is poor, no matter how richly upholstered his surroundings may be, who has never known the joy of being caught up out of himself by a great book. For a great book gives us something finer than the Freedom of the City. It gives us the Freedom of the Skies,

> "In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars
> And with their mild persistence urge man's search
> To vaster issues."

In real literature "The dream we live by is more real than the reality we ignore." Then life becomes more than meat and the body than raiment. Through the stimulation of great thoughts and emotions the miracle of

spiritual creation is repeated and man becomes a living soul. He does not come to the end of his tether with things that can be seen, touched, eaten, and drunk. He has learned to move in a new medium—the realm of the mind. He reigns over a new kingdom—not the animal or vegetable—but a nobler realm: "My mind to me a kingdom is."

For books are starting places of flights that are not only high and exhilarating but frequently lifelong. It is no exaggeration to say that the north pole was really discovered in a Washington bookstore, for it was there by seeing a book on Greenland that Peary first got his idea of going to the pole. There the dream that he lived with for twenty years first came to him and stayed until that day on which he planted the Stars and Stripes on a cairn of stones at the very top of the world. Some of the most exciting instants in the history of men's lives have happened when some book has literally been a ship of dreams which has carried them into an upper realm.

Yet how many to-day have abdicated their claim to this upper realm of the mind at the demand of the radio and the movie! There are wonders, indeed, which have their place, in

WEAF and KDKA, but they can never match for an instant the magic locked up in the ancient symbols A B C. For the fine art of reading contains the possibility of flight for the soul.

2. *A love of nature takes us off the earth.* That seems an obvious contradiction, for nature is the very earth itself. How can the earth lift a person out of it? "Behold I show you a mystery." The process is a mystery; but the fact of the experience is certified by millions who have opened their souls to the beauty of earth.

In Kingsley's words, "Beauty is God's handwriting" and speaks to the soul with a divine power. It speaks a language not of earth. It lifts us from the earth by stirring

> "A sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
> And the round ocean and the living air
> And the blue sky and in the mind of man."

How large a part of the noblest poetry of the race is just the record of the soul's flight from the earth, through the ecstasy of the beauty of nature! Some minds and tempera-

ments are apparently by natural endowment far more sensitive to nature than others. But when we are blind to the enchantment of the procession of the seasons; when we are deaf to the melodious oratorio of Creation, written by God himself and played on a thousand varied instruments; when the soul is insensible to the witchery of the sky or the face of the fields, it is usually because we have made the Great Refusal to open our soul to the grace of God in nature and have allowed a dull film gradually to steal over our eyes.

3. *Love lifts us from the earth.* "The lunatic, the lover, and the poet"—ecstasy makes strange bedfellows! The great soul with whose fancy we started out on this journey, Cyrano de Bergerac, was a bit of all three in one—lunatic, lover, and poet! What a clear, pure flame of noble and unselfish love burned in his heart all through the years in that high romance and tragedy! Love tilts the wings of the mind skyward and bears us off into the ether, when itself is not earthbound and weighted down with lust. Love is the worst abused, the worst misused, word in the language. It is stretched until it is made to cover mutually exclusive and antagonistic forces.

It reaches to the very skies when it is used to describe the divine force of a pure affection, purging life from base selfishness; when it describes that redeeming force sung in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, the very life spark of the religion of Christ. By thoughtless and profaning usage it is made to stoop to the very subcellars of human nature and men stupidly call mere animalism "love," thus crowning the worst with the best.

There has not been any great literature without great love, because you cannot have a great nature without great love. The great hearts of literature—Shakespeare, Scott, Dickens have a universal power, for they enable us to get off the earth through great emotions.

These have shown the mingled pathos and humor, tragedy and dignity, sorrow and beauty of human life and character. Love is not a fanciful trip to the moon. Sentimentally considered, the moon has been considered the planet of love; but fundamentally considered, it is not the moon but the sun. Love is a flight sunward. And if it be true and deep, it is not an Icarus flight with wings temporarily attached with wax.

Before the presence of a pure, genuine love there should always be the bowed head and knee of reverence. For the glory of the Lord is passing by.

4. *The true magic carpet is a prayer rug.* The magic carpet of Bagdad was a wonderful instrument of magic in the fairy world of the Arabian Nights. It could transport one in an instant to distant lands. Prayer is its more wonderful counterpart in the world of reality. We get off the earth in real communion with God and move in the sublimities of the spiritual realm. Who shall picture the experiences of the centuries when souls have found liberating wings in prayer? Paul's description of his experience, from which we take our text, is a normal one, which, thank God, can be tested by our venturing, "caught up into the heavens." Just to take one instance from millions, recall that testimony of Henry M. Stanley on the lifting power of prayer—a bit of history lived out in the loneliness and danger of the trackless jungles of Africa: "On all my expeditions prayer made me stronger morally and mentally than any of my non-praying companions. It did not blind my eyes or dull my mind, or close my ears; but, on the con-

trary, it gave me confidence. It did more; it gave me joy and pride in my work, and lifted me hopefully over the one thousand five hundred miles of forest tracks, eager to face the day's perils and fatigues."

"Lifted me hopefully"—that is the perfect description of the divine voyage of the spirit in prayer. Can any privation of life match that of the person who has never known the reality of that experience? "The act of praying is the very highest energy of which the human mind is capable." It begins in human energy; it is not a passive experience. Sometimes it is painfully active. But it eventuates in the greatest accession of energy which the mind and soul ever receive. There is a genuine Witching Hour in normal life, an hour when the Spirit which bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but no man knoweth whence it cometh or whither it goeth, fills our drooping sails and bears us on.

Prayer is the Grand Tour of the Universe. And it is worth noting that the outlook on life which is gained by real communion with God is in some respects surprisingly like the view of the earth as seen from an aeroplane. For one thing the things of earth seem small when

viewed from the sky. The buildings which towered above us, the hills which seemed like mountains, all diminish in magnitude. The vast sweep spread out to the eye compels a comparative measurement. Also, we see in a fresh way the relationship of parts to the whole. Our terribly important fences, town lines, State lines, and boundaries of every description do not show from the skies. We see the earth as one related whole.

So we see it from the elevation of prayer. We get not a bird's-eye view of the world but something better—a God's-eye view of it. The little heights we so feverishly strived for are not worth the fever. We measure all life's striving with a truer, divine perspective. Also we see relationships of earth. The higher we go in our thought, and the nearer to the heart of God we come, the more diminutive and silly seem the class distinctions which often loom up to earthly view like high eternal Chinese walls. We see, rather, the whole family of God, as Peter first saw it from the sky point of view on a housetop. That is why prayer is one of the mighty social forces making for a new international order.

"I'd like to get away from earth awhile,"

writes Robert Frost, not speaking directly of prayer, but in his verse he has given a moving description of the power of prayer endowing us with perspective:

"It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over."[1]

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. It can be put in one line of Edna Saint Vincent Millay's. Carry it with you forever:

"The soul can split the sky in two."

5. *Through the absorption of a great purpose is a never-failing way to get off the earth.*

"You're wounded, Buddie," said an officer to one of his men after a trench raid.

"That's so," the soldier answered in surprise, looking with curiosity at a red stream trickling down his arm. "I never noticed it."

He had been, in Paul's words, unaware whether he was "in the body or out of it." One

[1] From *Mountain Interval*, by Robert Frost. Reprinted by permission Henry Holt & Company.

thing he knew, he was in the *fight!* That holds true for every field of struggle. When we seek first some great objective, when the heart and mind are propelled by the momentum of a high purpose, we are lifted out of the power of petty annoyances to ensnare us. There is a counsel of practical wisdom to which we often listen, which, like many maxims of prudence, is good for a short distance and a limited area of life, "Go at life by the day and not by the job." As a warning against the energies of life being worn down by the attrition of needless worry, it is fine. As a strategy for the whole of life, it has about the value which a map of New Jersey would have for a man setting out from New York on a tour to California. It will be valuable for a short distance. But the spiritless trudge of life comes from the unimaginative "going at it" day by day, without ever filling it with the exaltation of far-reaching purpose. The whole counsel of Jesus falls in the direction of taking life up, not as an eight-hour shift, but for what it actually is—a bit of eternity, framed in a border of time. Go at life by the job, not the day's job, the year's job; not even a lifetime's job, but by the increasing purpose

that outruns the measure of your life. Let your purpose hold to sail beyond the sunset; build the energies of your life into the enduring structure of the kingdom of God.

For by doing so we retain life's necessary frenzy, that preservative tonic which keeps us from being hopelessly sane. As General Armstrong used to say so often to his students at Hampton, "Doing what can't be done is the glory of living." Or, in the less poetic but no less profoundly true and stirring words of Bernard Shaw, writing in the preface to *Man and Superman,* of that soul lit up with divine and lifelong frenzy, John Bunyan: "This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of Nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy."

6. Finally, of course, *Death takes us from the earth.* We cannot sidestep the physical fact. But we can *quickstep* the experience in such a manner as to transform it entirely. It is ours to decide whether we shall be pushed

off the earth, or like a gallant modern Magellan of the skies, we shall "take" off. There is an infinity of difference between the two.

Hold side by side two pictures. The first is that of a man to whom death is a surly push off the earth. It occurs in a letter written in 1890 by a United States senator to his wife: "What an uncivil host life is, to invite us to an entertainment which we are compelled to attend whether we like it or not, and then unceremoniously to take us by the arm and bow us out into the night, stormy and dismal, to go stumbling about without so much as a lantern to show us the way to another town!"

By its side place this picture of one to whom death is rather a glad leap.

"Some day the bell will sound,
Some day my heart will bound,
As with a shout
That school is out
And lessons done.
I homeward run."[1]

[1] From "When School Is Out," by Maltbie D. Babcock. Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

VIII

HERETICS

"Thou . . . didst not deny my faith."—*Revelation 2. 13.*

THE most dangerous heresies with which the Christian faith has to deal are not to be found in any formal list. That formal list is long enough. It would seem to cover every conceivable deviation from the faith. Merely to recall the names of a few of the major heresies is like making a tour over the world's great battlefields—Arianism, Manicheism, Socinianism, Sabellianism, Antinomianism—what a wilderness of isms! The disconcerting variety seems to offer us a fine chance of being heretical without knowing it. Probably we are.

Nevertheless, the deadliest heresies have always been and are to-day not labeled as such. They are attitudes of mind and life which may not deny the letter of any doctrine of the faith, but which do the far more deadly

hurt of denying by act the life and power of Christianity.

So much superficial thinking has been done on the subject of heresy that it ought not to be discussed without some effort being made to understand sympathetically the tremendous issues which have been at stake through the centuries in preserving the integrity of Christianity and preventing it from losing its savor as a unique revelation of God and becoming a vitiated and powerless degeneration. Our impatience with narrow-minded literalists who brand any deviation from their own rigid dogmatism on all points in the heavens above and the earth beneath as heresy, may blind us to the immeasurable service to our religion and to the world of those who have fought a life-and-death struggle against ideas and doctrines which would have utterly destroyed Christianity as an adequate force for world redemption. The crucial importance of controversies such as that of Athanasius against Arius, for instance, is perfectly pictured in the words of Jesus, "If the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing but to be cast out and thenceforth trodden under the foot of men."

If the Christian revelation be obscured, if the peculiar characteristics which make it the gospel of the Son of God be lost, then indeed is it fit only to be trodden under the foot of men as an obsolete speculation, stripped of present power. Unless the Christian ethic is rooted in revelation it will soon dissolve into a fog of vague and powerless good intentions.

We have paused to say this, lest anything which follows be construed as lacking in appreciation of the crucial necessity of preserving the gospel from undergoing additions or subtractions which would prevent it from coming to our day with the simplicity, purity, and power which it had when Jesus first brought it to the world.

Nevertheless, recognizing all this clearly, it is still true that the denials of the faith which do the largest harm and in which we are most liable to fall are practical rather than intellectual denials. They are the denials of the Christian working principles of life. The heresy most to be feared is not one which may deny one of the five points of Calvinism or one of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion. The arch heresy is a denial of one of the Beatitudes or one of the two great commandments of

Jesus—"Love the Lord thy God . . . and thy neighbor as thyself." For Christianity existed for centuries before the Westminster Confession or the Thirty-nine Articles were drawn up; it will continue long after both are forgotten. But it cannot survive if its essential spirit ceases to be expressed in human lives.

When the guardians of orthodoxy ask whether a teacher or preacher or author is "sound," they always refer to his intellectual views and never to his ruling spirit. We need not be lax about the Christian creed to say that the worst of all heresies are those of the heart and life. Let us look at four great heresies of practical everyday life, in the hope that seeing them clearly and feeling them deeply, we may so order our lives as to win that verdict pronounced in the book of Revelation on the little band of Christians at Pergamum, "Thou didst not deny my faith."

I

The tepid, listless acceptance of our Christian faith as though it were a commonplace affair is common enough, alas! But it is a monstrous heresy striking at the heart of the cause of Christ. It proclaims to the world

that Christianity is nothing to get excited about; that it actually does nothing noticeable in the lives of its followers; that it is distinctly one of life's negligible, minor affairs. That would be a fair inference to be drawn from the attitude and conduct of hosts of Christian people. They have denied the faith once delivered to the saints, for that faith was and is a glowing, vibrant energy which fills life with radiant joy and power. "The number of people," wrote James Denney, "who suppose they are Christians while it is all the same to them if Christ had never lived, is appalling." His words are severe but they describe accurately a widespread condition. It is not that people deny any of the New Testament conceptions of Christ. That imputation would doubtless be indignantly resented. Yet the attitude which they take to their faith and their church as a bit of routine, something which can be readily shoved out of the way when more important concerns demand, a thing which has no revolutionary effect on life whatever, is a vital denial of its power.

Froude, the historian, says of one of Queen Elizabeth's ministers that "he loved God in a

commonplace sort of way." That kind of love does not effect anything; the great reformers, the men who need no memorial—Francis of Assisi, Wycliffe, Luther, Savonarola, Wesley —they all loved God with so passionate an intensity that they turned the course of human affairs into new channels.

That listless attitude which never gives to the world the impression that we are in touch with secret sources of abounding joy and power is a chief reason why the world does not press on us the question, which the onlookers put to Peter and John at the gate of the Temple—"In what name and by what power have ye done this?" The result is well put by John Kelman: "It is mockery to seek to reap the harvest of Canaan on the fields of lukewarm Laodicea." It is a heresy to have the thermometer of the heart stand at zero or five above when it should stand, in season and out of season, at summer heat. We hear a great deal about the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. Much discussion of so-called heresy centers on the matter. But there is another thing of greater importance—verbal inspiration *from* the Scripture. For the Scripture should inspire great verbs in a person's

life, to be, to have, to do, to give, to love. When the Scripture does not inspire life to the activity of great verbs, then is our faith vain.

The reason for this heresy is very frequently that our religion has never known the reality of a first-hand experience but has been a blurred second or third-hand impression. William J. Locke, in *The Wonderful Year,* gives an effective picture of the weakness of third-hand religion:

One of the characters seeks to explain the odd phenomenon of a Frenchwoman who was very "religious" but not very Christian: " 'Mon ami,' said Bigourdin, 'the Bible taught the church the beautiful history of Jesus Christ. The church told a Bishop. The Bishop a priest. The priest told the wife of the subprefect. The wife of the subprefect told the wife of the mayor. The wife of the mayor told the elderly unmarried sister of the corn-chandler, and the unmarried sister of the corn-chandler told Clothilde. And that's all that Clothilde knows about Christianity.' "[1]

Is it any wonder that it didn't "take"? Keep Clothilde in mind for a moment. For hers is

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[1] From *The Wonderful Year*, by W. J. Locke. Reprinted by permission Dodd, Mead & Company.

not an unusual case. Is it, by chance, anything like your own? Have you ever come out of the darkness of a third-hand tradition into a first-hand experience of God through Christ? It is yours for the asking. For he that asketh receiveth.

II

The absence of an active love is an arch heresy, for it is a denial of the central attribute of God and the very heart of the Christian way of life. "God is love." "If a man say he loves God and loveth not his neighbor, he is a liar and the truth is not in him." Strong language! But the crass paganism of that practical denial does not admit of any velvet words. So clearly did Saint Paul see the essence of Christianity, so deeply did he feel it, that he devotes the noblest utterance of all human speech, his great Hymn of Love in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, to showing that no lavish offering of either tongue, mind, or hand could possibly make up for the lack of an active spirit of love as the central force of a person's life.

The greatest heresy of which an automobile could be guilty would be to have no engine,

for it is that essential which makes an automobile. It is not the beautifully wrought body or the dozen rightfully named accessories. If it has no generator of power it is nothing but ingeniously wrought junk. The absence of love in a life is the capital heresy of "no engine." Yet what a common condition it is! We can go through all the motions which are the traditional expression of Christianity, we can present a flawless orthodoxy of opinion, enjoy a congenial fellowship with a select group, exhibit generosity, go to considerable personal exertion, and yet never have our soul motivated by that warm, sacrificial love of men which is the very center of the Christian ideal of life. "Love," says Emerson, paraphrasing Paul, "is the sole title deed to property in the spiritual world."

There can be no true orthodoxy which is passionless. Shall we not search our hearts to see if we can indeed find in them that love of men which hopeth, believeth, is patient and faileth never? For that alone makes us bear the marks of the Lord Jesus. Have we ever, either consciously or unconsciously, presented him the ornaments of praise and homage instead of the active energy of love which

thrusts us out into the service of men? Just before the Spanish-American War, when the Cuban patriot, Maximo Gomez, was making such a heroic struggle for the liberation of Cuba, an American citizen donated two thousand dollars for a beautiful gold-handled, diamond-studded sword for Gomez, who was grandiloquently described as "the world's greatest living soldier." This sword was carried to Gomez by a messenger who made his way through the Spanish lines. When it was presented to Gomez, both tears and oaths failed to express his wrath. "With my troops desperate for food, clothing, and ammunition," he cried, "you Americans spend money on this silly ornament!" Ornaments are a poor substitute for active service and fellowship in suffering. Yet how often men offer to Christ, in the midst of his great warfare for the redemption of humanity, the empty ornaments of creedal correctness, of praise that goes no deeper than the lips, while in the heart is a passionless aloofness from his cause.

III

The refusal to apply the gospel to society is a denial of Christ. Such a refusal misrepre-

sents him; it circumscribes him; it throws up barricades in the path of his kingdom. It is more clearly a heresy to-day than ever before. Indeed, we cannot rightly sit in judgment on the church of one, two, or three centuries ago because it did not have a vision of the social expression of the gospel. The church is a cross-section of the people of any time and the reigning ideas and conceptions were prevailingly individualistic.

The simpler economic and social conditions did not create that complex situation which we call the social problem. The very root idea of the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth was foreign to the traditional conception of Christianity which had existed for centuries. Indeed, it is only within the last fifty years, roughly speaking, that a central place in Christian thinking has been recovered for that fundamental proclamation of Jesus—the kingdom of God. The industrial revolution and the consequent development of modern conditions of life, with the infinitely more close interrelation and interdependence of society, has made painfully clear that the institutions of society as well as the men and women who compose it must embody and ex-

press the Christian ideal. All this is a commonplace of Christian thinking to-day and need not be labored. Our present concern is merely to set the refusal to accept the actual Christianization of the whole social order as the goal of the Christian Church, as a fatal heresy—a denial of Christ. As we have just seen, there was a time when that social goal of Christianity was so obscured from sight, by many causes, that inability to see it could not be called a heresy. That day is over. The flooding light which has poured in on us in the last fifty years has shown inescapably that the essential task of Christianity is not only that of saving men out of an evil world but actually saving the world itself and all its institutions from the domination of evil forces which destroy and maim and brutalize life. We have no alternative but to accept that full commission of Christ or deny his validity. Indeed, the very future of the church is dependent on the employment of its full energies into the task of bringing in the reign of Christ into the whole of life—economics, social, and political. For, as R. H. Tawney says, we cannot permanently have a Christian Church in a pagan society. Either the world must be permeated

with Christian ideals, or the church itself will lose its savor, become itself infected with the pagan standards of the world, and be trodden under the feet of men.

There is an "irrepressible conflict" between Christ and the basic ideas of a large part of so-called civilization to-day. To put profits before personality is the simplest and most complete way of denying everything that Jesus ever said which can be imagined. Yet in the presence of an industrial regime which is organized around that very idea, many Christian people have taken the cowardly and selfish attitude of Louis XV, when he saw the tottering of the royalist regime before the French Revolution, "Oh, well, it will last my time!"

Gerald Stanley Lee says very pointedly of the festival of Christmas that it is too large a thing to be tucked away in the toe of a child's stocking. It is true of the whole gospel of which Christmas is a symbol. It is too large a thing to be tucked away behind the stained-glass windows of a church or in the snug fastness of a cozy home. It belongs there, but it belongs everywhere.

Have we entered fully into this passion of

Jesus or are we encamped on the edges—pleasant and beautiful edges, let it be granted—of the main Christian purpose? A keen criticism of actors was recently made: "We are moved to wonder if most actors do not pay too much attention to the words which they are to speak, and too little to what the whole thing is about." Take these words into your heart and think them over with reference to your part in the great unfolding drama of the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. Do not be guilty of the heresy of remaining ignorant or unconcerned with "what the whole thing is about." It is our grasp of the meaning of the whole plot of redemption which alone gives value to all orthodoxies. For, as one has truly said, "If a ship is merely going to ride at anchor till she rots, it doesn't make a straw's difference whether her chart and compass are false or true."

IV

A fourth heresy might well be called *the heresy of the hemisphere.* And many there be that find it. It is the practical denial that God loved the whole world. It is the provincial attitude of mind which thinks in half-

globes, in inclosed yards, behind the picket fences of race. It never sees, with the eyes of Christ, the whole human family. A few days before the eclipse of the sun, January 24, 1925, a Buffalo paper printed a story of the eclipse under the heading "Local News." We smile at that, but it reflects perfectly the smug racial or denominational complacency which would claim the great universal truths of the spiritual world as their own "local news"! It never yearns with the heart of the Master to bring the life of God into the whole world.

This heresy does not draw up intellectual denials of the divinity of Christ. It does not need to. It slurs that divinity in a far more thoroughgoing fashion, by acquiescing in a conception of Christ which makes him a sort of tribal God of our borough, our country, our race. Heretics of this sort, who have not grown up into the missionary passion of their faith, do not thrill their own souls and the world with the chorus, "Christ for the world we sing." Instead we hear the tinkling, diminutive, childish melody, "You in your little corner and I in mine." That's the trouble—corners! "This thing was not done in a corner," we read of the launching of Chris-

tianity. As it was in the beginning, it is now and ever shall be. True Christianity cannot be lived in a corner. It must be universal. Only a gospel which can save all men can save one man.

The most malignant form of this heresy is in the utterly unchristian feeling of many that the world extension of Christianity is a sort of extra-curriculum activity; the feeling that non-Christian peoples need not be disturbed; they are doing very well. Bishop William F. McDowell has met this heresy with devastating force again and again. He has spoken in a single sentence, one word which will echo through the land long after he has ceased to speak. No one who has ever heard him say it will ever forget the accents: *"No one is getting along pretty well without Jesus Christ."*

Let us stop here. For we have reached the throbbing heart of the faith once delivered to the saints.

IX

TAKING THE VEIL

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."—*John 10. 10.*

"I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world."—*John 17. 15.*

"Go ye into all the world."—*Mark 16. 15.*

One of the most curious and interesting paintings in the National Gallery in London is one by Samuel Butler, the author of *The Way of All Flesh,* entitled "Mr. Heatherley's Holiday." Mr. Heatherley had a school of art which Butler attended. Mr. Heatherley never went away for a holiday. Once he had to go out of town on business and did not return until the next day. One of his students remarked to him that he must have enjoyed the change and especially must have found it refreshing to sleep for once out of London. "No," said Heatherley, "I did not like it. Country air has no body." Whenever the school was closed for a holiday Heatherley

employed his time in the lively and exhilarating recreation of mending the skeleton which hung in a corner of the studio and was used in teaching anatomy. He is represented as so engaged in Butler's picture.

The picture is an effective representation of a life so dwarfed and narrowed by routine that it becomes a pathetic caricature of human personality. Mr. Heatherley and millions like him are just as definitely withdrawn from the real drama of life as though they had "taken the veil." Indeed, they have been subjected to the same drastic surgery which has cut them off from life, without the spiritual compensations which frequently go with life in a convent.

There is always something sad to many onlookers in the spectacle of a young girl "taking the veil," deliberately withdrawing from the normal contacts and interests of life to shut herself up in a convent. Admire the spirit of sacrifice and devotion as we may, we cannot keep back the feeling that it is a wasteful withering of life which does not best express the spirit of Him who came that we might have life abundantly and who prayed that his disciples should not be taken out of the world.

Yet the nun in the convent is not the only one who "takes the veil" in the sense of shutting out of view a large part of the human scene and immuring oneself in a small prison. Multitudes who walk the streets in the latest garb and who run eagerly and busily to and fro have in reality "taken the veil" and shut themselves off from a large part of what life ought to hold.

As we look at a nun, garbed in black, her view shut in by heavy blinders of a hood, riding in a train with all the glory and fragrance of spring in the countryside shut from view, while her downcast eyes are riveted on a prayer book in a dead language, we feel intently the violence done to the growth of the mind and spirit. But we ought to feel it still more perhaps with the business man a few feet away in the smoking room. He has not taken the veil of the Convent of Saint Mary. But his speech betrays him as an acolyte of a far less distinguished order—that of Saint Crœsus. As you listen to his conversation you can discern clearly the smothering, blinding veil which is hung in front of his mind and soul. Oliver Wendell Holmes said that a person will describe in a five-minute

conversation an arc from which you can compute his whole circle. So from a half hour's conversation you can describe the little circular track around which the man's mind travels. It would, no doubt, be preposterous to picture crowds of business men, housewives, and lordly "executives" passing up and down Main Street and Broadway with a veil hung over their faces, peering out on the world between blinders which shut out three fourths of the view, but that frequently would be the inner reality of the scene.

How far that self-entombment in any limited interest is from the spirit of Jesus! We have taken three texts, not with any hope of catching all their large meanings, but of revealing the contrast that the mind of Jesus makes to the shriveling of life so common among us. These texts are brought to mind in the hope that they may prove magnetic poles to guide us into the fullness of the abundant life he came to give. The first, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," has many meanings. But it has this one meaning, that Christ came to bring a divine and expanding symmetry into life. The second text, "I pray

not that thou shouldst take them from the world," means that Christ would not inter his disciples in any kind of a cell, whether it be called sacred or not, but would set them in the midst of life with a frontage on all sides. The third text, "Go ye into all the world," is a great missionary text. But, interpreted by the life of Jesus, it is a personal ideal of life as well, that of a spirit in touch with all the living world around it.

How shall we rend the veils which would shut from our view God's great world? It is not an academic question but an intensely practical one. Have you "taken the veil" and retired into any convent from which you look on just as much of the world as can be seen through a narrow slit?

The first indispensable step is to see clearly the insidious hangings which drop in front of us.

The essential tragedy is that of living in a miniature universe of our own making instead of the teeming world of God's making, a world of magnificent distances. A famous Norwegian physicist, Doctor Birkeland, has constructed for purposes of experiment a miniature universe of which he is master. It is a

huge glass ball with a capacity of seventy liters. The sun and planets are represented by copper spheres and metallic discs. In this little "universe" Doctor Birkeland has conducted many experiments, particularly in the study of magnetism.

A great many people, neither so famous nor scientific, have likewise made their own little toy universe and in it they live and move and have their being. Needless to say, it is a pre-Copernican universe; they are the Lilliputian center and the cozy little system revolves around them. They are monarch of all they survey, but the surveying is hardly worth the trouble, for the outer fringe of the whole system is only a few feet away. They do not live in God's world with its colorful pageant of races, its tense battles, its thrilling plot. They have taken the veil against all that.

1. *Men take the veil by a too intense specialism and professionalism.* Emerson sounded a warning which applies to every profession as well as literature when he said, "Let not the author eat up the man, so that he become a porch and no house!" What an arresting figure of speech—"a porch and no house!"—like the famous grin of the Cheshire cat with-

out the cat. A porch, a mere appendage; an accessory, an afterthought, allowed to displace the main thing, the house itself, which alone gives it significance. Yet that is exactly what happens when a part of life displaces the whole. The man who in pursuit of one microscopic phase of existence becomes divorced from the splendid spectacle of life is a tragic figure. Louis Untermeyer's description of the ultra-modern poet Ezra Pound is a vivid picture of a man who has taken the veil: "He has developed into a connoisseur of the curious; a formalist arguing in a musty and deserted classroom. It is not life he seeks but the library; and there he has locked himself in. Once in a while he opens a window and hears people laughing and brawling in the street. But he listens only for a moment. The window is slammed, the curtains are drawn, the midnight oil is lit—and he is back again, picking his way through literatures, amassing technicalities."[1]

"We ought to use pigeonholes but not live in them," says A. G. Gardiner. But a pigeonhole of a narrow interest has proved a *manhole*

[1] From *American Poetry Since 1900*, by Louis Untermeyer. Reprinted by permission Henry Holt and Company.

through which many persons have dropped out of life.

2. *Business* has frequently proved an opaque veil shutting out a large part of life. Under that world "business" we emphatically include the absorbing and intricate business of housekeeping. The veil which often blocks a woman's view of God's world—the world she was created to move in—is not made of cloth but of wood and aluminum—in other words, a kitchen cabinet. A kitchen can as easily be made into a toy universe as the main hall of the Stock Exchange. The only place at which the war, which devastated so much of the earth, really touched some American housewives was the incidental shortage in housemaids! They were securely veiled from actually seeing or feeling any other results of that world convulsion.

Robert Louis Stevenson has put the whole blunder of taking the veil in the Convent of Commerce in his words: "Perpetual devotion to what a man calls his business is only to be sustained by perpetual neglect of other things. And it is not by any means certain that a man's business is the most important thing." A. S. M. Hutchinson has perfectly expressed

the effect of exclusive devotion to profit in the bitter exclamation of Mark Sabre, "You cannot pull out this big, booming sort of stuff they call success if you're going to see any other point of view but your own." That is just the trouble. You have to put on a veil shutting out every other point of view but your own to win "the big, booming" stuff.

What are some of the results of this taking the veil, shutting out all interest but business and the boom? William James has pointed out one of them in words that are hot with moral indignation: "Callousness to abstract justice is *the* sinister feature of United States civilization—and this callousness is a symptom of the moral flabbiness born of the exclusive worship of the false goddess Success. The squalid cash interpretation put upon the word success is our national disease."

3. *Simple withering of the interests,* paralyzed from lack of use and stimulation, has sent many a mind and soul into solitary confinement. A hard shell inevitably forms over the mind which does not swing freely to different points of the compass like a searchlight. When our interests decrease in number and the animating spark of curiosity dies down,

mental anemia sets in. Loss of appetite for the world is both a cause and effect of this condition. The world is visible only through a few peepholes, and men so afflicted must interpret the whole from the little segment they see.

One short conversation will set the picture before us more effectively than a page of argument. A man who returned from a visit to Europe recently was talking to a business friend of his purchases over there. Among other things, he mentioned that he had purchased a Rembrandt.

The eyes of the business man glowed with interest. "Oh," he said, "you did! How many cylinders?"

The man answered him in the only language he could understand:

"Eight, with balloon tires."

The man to whom a Rembrandt must necessarily be some kind of an automobile lived in a world of cylinders. For those in such a pass Stevenson's prayer, "Stab my spirit *broad* awake," has a peculiar insight. For they are awake only along a narrow slit.

4. We take the veil, shutting out every flooding sunrise of life, *when we allow our*

sympathies to harden. For then we do not really see people. Hardening of the sympathies is a far more devastating disease than hardening of the arteries, for sympathies are the arteries of the soul. When they harden the rich red blood of life ceases to flow. It used to be a fairly common sight to see in a jeweler's window a striking advertisement of a watch ticking in a cake of ice. That is a truthful picture of a person whose sympathies have congealed. When we draw the blinds in our house, shutting out the passing parade of sorrow, need, and sin, life takes the terrible revenge of departing and leaving us in a chilly tomb:

"She built herself a little house
All walled about with Pride;
Took Prudence as a servant,
And locked herself inside.

"She drew the blinds down tight as tight
When Sorrow chanced to roam.
Experience called—she sent down word
That she was not at home.

"Then wherefore should she now complain
And wherefore should she sigh,
That Life and Love and Laughter
Have passed unseeing by?"

General Gordon used frequently to speak of the sovereign duty of creeping under the other man's skin. It is not only a sovereign duty but the sovereign adventure and enlargement of life. It lifts blinds and veils and fills the house with windows. But with the blinds all drawn, eyes averted from the risks of entanglement with blundering, stupid folks, we have taken the veil from much that gives life its true glory.

Here is a question which goes to the very center both of how much use you are in life and also how much joy you get out of it: How many people do you know? How many kinds of people can you get interested in? Just "nice" people like yourself? If that is the case, I pity you! For I have never found that the "nice" people were always the most interesting. Professor Wilson, of Edinburgh, old Christopher North, used to thank the Lord that he never lost his taste for bad company! There is no boon in life greater than a confirmed taste for all varieties of human nature. Yet how many bunglers and blunderers have entombed themselves in a mausoleum behind fences! Carl Sandburg has well noted the tragedy of the fence wherever it is built:

"Now the stone house on the lake front is finished
and the workmen are beginning the fence.
The palings are made of iron bars with steel
points that can stab the life out of any man
who falls on them.
As a fence, it is a masterpiece, and will shut off
the rabble and all vagabonds and hungry men
and all wandering children looking for a place
to play.
Passing through the bars and over the steel
points will go nothing except Death and the
Rain and To-morrow."[1]

For every fence we deliberately build with its hard and forbidding spikes eventually incloses a mausoleum.

A grim picture, you say. For one reason. So far it is a picture of the insidious, dwarfing tendencies of life. But it is a picture without Christ. Christ can rend all veils which shut out the abundant life. No miracle of his earthly life is more characteristic or more often recorded than that of removing the veil which covered the eyes of the blind. "And Jesus, being moved with compassion, touched their eyes: and straightway they received their sight, and followed him." Again and again those words recur in the gospel like a strain

[1] From Poems of Carl Sandburg. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt & Company.

of music. Again and again they have recurred through the centuries as Christ has lifted men out of partial, fractional existences into the fullness of abundant life.

Christ lifts the veil that obscures the sky. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord." All veils drop from the eyes which have seen the revelation of God in Christ. The toy universe has lost its lure. It is a little cage too small for a spirit which has caught a glimpse of God in his great world.

When the Bastille was taken, prisoners were released who had been shut up for so long that it was no longer remembered who they were or why they were imprisoned. For years they had looked out on the world through a keyhole. When the doors were burst open these prisoners were turned loose and went out into the bewildering, whirling eddy of the Paris mob. It was terribly confusing to those who had been shut up in a cell for years. But at least it was tremendous life.

Jesus comes to us peering out of a keyhole and leads us out into life. He did it for Peter, changing Peter's vision of the world from the

keyhole of Jewish prejudices to the largeness of Christian fellowship. He did it for Paul. He is doing it to-day. Let him exchange your keyhole for the wonder of the sky, of the far horizon of life. For without Christ we are like those in the Bastille—prisoners at a keyhole.

Christ removes the veils which shut out the world by quickening our sympathies. When we catch his spirit, life reaches out. It voyages. It finds the true romance of adventures in other men's lives. We are amazed at the wonders of radio which enable us to hear heart beats a distance of five hundred miles across the sea. But an even greater wonder is the sensitive, Christian sympathy which can hear and feel the heart beats of human need and brotherhood clear around the world. The famous psychologist Dr. G. Stanley Hall all through his life made a unique attempt to enter understandingly into the experiences of other people. In an institution for the blind he blindfolded himself for an entire day; he learned the deaf mute alphabet; he had seen three executions, visited morgues, revival meetings, and anarchist meetings. Paupers, criminals, wayward children, and circus

freaks were among his intimate friends. Those unusual experiences were in a true sense adventures in sympathy. They tore away partitions which separated.

When Christ touches the sympathy it becomes active and restless. Each day is an adventure into new realms.

Christ came that you might have abundant life. Are you willing to trade your particular veil for his eyes?

X

A PROFANE LIFE

"See to it that no one . . . turns to . . . a profane life as Esau did."—*Hebrews 12. 16.*

It is a hard fate to go down through history inescapably tied to one adjective—and that adjective one of the most unlovely words in all the language—*profane!* Esau had a hard lot, it seems, both at the hands of time and of eternity. An attorney could make out a strong case for him. He could show with considerable plausibility that Esau suffered from grand larceny and conspiracy at the hands of Jacob and that he has been libeled to all the succeeding centuries by an unjust epithet—profane. It is at once, as is so frequently the case, both an epithet and an epitaph.

It is that epitaph of Esau which we would consider here. For that word, "profane," as used by the spiritual genius who wrote the book of Hebrews carries a message of peculiar

timeliness and sharpness to our modern life of to-day.

Indeed, we might say with considerable truth that the picture of Esau is not only a modern one but in some respects a peculiarly American one. His character is marked by many attractive qualities which have found large expression in American life. From the glimpse we have of him he gives the impression of being strong and hearty—what might be called an "outdoor man." Compared to the craft and guile of his brother Jacob, he was simple-minded. He had much of the good nature which goes with that type of character. His forgiveness of Jacob at their meeting after years of separation is one of the tender and beautiful stories of the Bible. He was the kind of man in whose honor the chorus has been raised times without number, "For he's a jolly good fellow!" Esau was a "sport"—not in the sinister sense in which that term is frequently used, but of an easy-going disposition, ready to take a chance on the future, a man of action rather than thought, sensations rather than ideas, not heavily loaded down with convictions, largely insensible to the intangible spiritual values of life.

The name of this man in ancient history was Esau. His name to-day is Legion. He is many. He throngs the streets, he tills the farms, he runs the machines, he dictates letters in the offices, he sells everything from steel skyscraper frames to collar buttons. If we had to describe this twentieth-century American Esau to-day, in one adjective (always a perilous and an unjust thing to do, for nothing so complex as human personality can be expressed in one stroke of the pen), we would not select the word "profane." For the change in usage has limited that word to mean irreverent or coarse or blasphemous speech. And that subject has nothing to do with our present theme. It was not in the mind of the author of Hebrews when he used the word. Sometimes it is a characteristic of Esau, ancient or modern. Frequently it is not. The word which would come nearest to describing the character would possibly be the word "secular." Yet that word itself has a flavor of obsolete distinctions which are no longer regarded as true. Still it does afford a clue to the quality of mind and heart. Esau's great lack was an insensibility to the ideal purposes and values represented by his hereditary right

as the head of the family of the next generation, making him the leader in the working out of the far-reaching, mysterious spiritual purpose which God had started to work out through the family line of Abraham and Isaac. When such an ethereal enterprise as that was brought into competition with something *real,* something he could see and handle and, no doubt, strongest of all at the time, *smell,* "for a single meal he parted with his birthright." It was the superficiality of his nature, the bluntness of his mind to everything except the tangible, which makes up the content of the adjective "profane."

It is just that superficiality which makes a *profane* life to-day. The modern tribe of Esau is made up of those whose life is, in a word, all secular, in whom practical materialism, frequently dignified by the solid sounding name "common sense," has outlawed the pursuit of spiritual ends, frequently denominated as "nonsense and moonshine." Esau is the man who has no inner shrine, no secret altar of high and solemn reverence, no tender or deep appreciation of mystic values. The constitution of his mind has no shadows, no angle nooks, no chapel. Owing to the pressure of

business the chapel has been transformed into a stock room. Esau died the other day in New York city. This was the obituary which appeared in the daily papers: "He was a well-known patron of the turf. He was one of the best connoisseurs of wines in America and was always present at the first night at the theater and opera." That was all. The reporter did not add a Scripture reference. We will supply the deficiency. "See to it that no one turns to . . . a profane life as Esau did."

There used to be a division of history into the two classes of Sacred and Profane History. We have ceased that impossible separation. All history ought to be sacred history recording the action of the Spirit of God in the life of the world. But in the sense in which our text uses the word there is a vast amount of profane history being made in the movement of lives unlighted by any divine spark, undirected toward any spiritual purpose.

While we are thinking particularly of our own day and neighborhood, we do not forget that the tribe of Esau has flourished in all the ages. We meet him in the Middle Ages frequently. Sometimes he was a baron and a

valiant trencher man. Sometimes he was a king. Sometimes, alas! a bishop. Sometimes, alas! alas! a Pope. Often he was one of the "supers." And how perfectly the rôle of English squire in the eighteenth century fitted him —good hunting, fine feasting, with the style in religion very comfortably intolerant of any "nonsense," such as "enthusiasm"!

Let us take care that we do not slander Esau. He is not the vicious man. He is not the profligate. That man makes a large and distinct problem in society, but it is not the problem of Esau. He is not cited in our text as an example of gross immorality. That evil has a special mention of its own in the very verse from which our text comes. The common pulpit use of Esau as a horrible example of enslavement to degrading physical appetites has been greatly overdone and is misleading. The "profane" life in the sense of our text, and in the sense which it is lived about us, is a far different and more subtle thing than the obvious calamity of the physical "waster."

Nor is Esau the aggressive evil worker. It is the achievement of some men to realize completely the childish ambition of every normal high-spirited boy of twelve or thirteen years of

age—that of taking up piracy as a life-work. True, the modern Captain Kidd disdains the use of such outworn instruments as the cutlass or the flint lock even though he still employs the gangplank for the elimination of rivals. But the monopoly, the franchise, the stock manipulation, all serve his needs better than the old methods. Yet Esau is not Captain Kidd, modern style.

His is, as we have attempted to say, the life without spiritual quality. There are no mountains in his geography, no heights to which he climbs with aspiration. There are no valleys of inward struggle. Life is all on a level. What a suggestive phrase "a dead level" is! Levels are usually dead. Life on a level where the soul does not storm and capture its Lookout Mountain is always dead. "We are still souls," says Shailer Mathews, "even though we may have lost the definition of what souls are."

It is what happens in the soul which makes a life record a bit of sacred history, and the tragedy of Esau is that nothing particularly happens there. President Emeritus Hadley, of Yale, says that America has four national games—business, politics, baseball, and poker.

Whether this list be exhaustive or not, it does suggest the four boundaries, north, east, south and west, by which many lives are inclosed. A vivid picture of one branch of the tribe of Esau occurs in the following quotation picturing an audience at a theater. The words were not written by a preacher but by a dramatic critic, Percy Hammond, in the course of his daily work, for they occurred in the review of a play: "There they sat, an empty, unthinking, overfed, overdrank outfit, slaking their cheap theatrical emotions at a fount of pink theatrical piffle." There is a note of contempt here, and even of venom, which must not enter into our thinking, but at least it does give what might be called an inside picture of a great company, for it records the truth—that life barren of spiritual heights frequently drops to that inane level. For "inane" means, literally, "without spirit." Such a superficial absorption in *things,* in the presence of the great issues and needs of this seething world to-day, deserves being described in the words which Philip Guedalla uses to sum up Colonel Repington's Diary of the War, "Watching an earthquake from a seat in the cabaret."

Perhaps the whole situation of all the mod-

ern tribe of Esau can be truthfully described in the expression, "skyscraper foundations for bungalow lives." The spiritual faculties of man are the foundation for a personality that touches the skies. Disregarding the plans of the great Architect who laid the foundations, many have erected a low-lying one-story bungalow. The trouble with such a life is not that there is anything unwholesome about the bungalow. It is simply that it is not what the foundation calls for—a skyscraper.

I

Let us try to see clearly what it is that a life of this sort misses. Look at it first through the eyes of a real seer—Robert Browning. One of the great insights and emphases of Browning is that life is truly measured only by *spiritual intensity.* This he returns to again and again as one would exhibit a jewel first in one light and then in another. We read newspaper stories every day in which centenarians tell us how to prolong our lives. We are told by statisticians that in less than fifty years the average span of life has been increased by more than fifteen years. The vital point is, however, not "How long did you

live?" but "What use did you make of the time?" No drama on the stage is a success unless it has a climax or several of them—what is known as the supreme moment, sometimes more crudely called "the big scene." The same is equally true of a person's life. What makes it significant are moments when we live intensely, moments when the spirit is stirred, and in which we live more than some persons live in years.

It is just that intensity of spiritual hunger, of aspiration and venture, which Esau misses. Life is a succession of orderly days which pass by in well-drilled file. There is no sense of mystery, no spiritual exaltation, no overmastering search which makes life a wistful quest, like that of the man who knew there was somewhere a pearl of great price worth a lifetime's adventuring to find. It is a tragic blunder, as bad as that of the original Esau, and essentially the same blunder, when one exchanges the mystic symbol of the exclamation point for the prosaic one of the dollar mark. Dr. Edwin E. Slosson has traced this progression in regard to one's attitude to mystery: "These are the three stages through which individuals and races pass in their attitude toward the un-

known in nature: first, wonder; second, curiosity; third, utilization. Each new lesson in humanity's book of knowledge is punctuated first with !, to be followed by ? and later, perhaps, $."[1]

That progression is a downward one when it represents our general attitude to life—to the spiritual possibilities of life. An unspiritual life of this sort, let us repeat again, is not characterized by positive transgression. Its tragedy is that it misses its birthright—its heritage of capacity of fellowship with God and its heritage of the stir and thrill of high activity in a great purpose. There is a poignant glimpse of this truth in Marguerite Wilkinson's poem, "Guilty":

"I never cut my neighbor's throat;
My neighbor's gold I never stole;
I never spoiled his house and land;
But God have mercy on my soul!

"For I am haunted night and day
By all the deeds I have not done;
O unattempted liveliness!
O costly valor never won!"[2]

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[1] From "Chats on Science, by Edwin E. Slosson. Reprinted by permission The Century Co.

[2] Reprinted by permission of Marguerite Wilkinson from "The Christian Century."

The issue of Esau's life, emptied of aspiration and endeavor, when it does not result in a thoroughly chloroformed soul, is a baffled sense of futility, an impotent wonder about the value and purpose of life. One comes to the end of the journey wondering whether it has been worth while and whether it was supposed to have any destination. Let two very sharp present-day expressions of this very common mood speak their own verdict on Esau. The first is from A. E. Housman's *Last Poems:*

"Yonder see the morning blink:
The sun is up, and up must I,
To wash and dress and eat and drink
And look at things and talk and think
And work, and God knows why."[1]

And the second is like unto it. It is the thought of that notable American Esau, George F. Babbitt, as recorded by Sinclair Lewis: "It was coming to him that perhaps all life as he knew it and vigorously practiced it was futile; that heaven as portrayed by the Rev. Dr. John Jennison Drew was neither probable nor very interesting; that he hadn't

[1] Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt & Company.

much pleasure out of making money; that it was of doubtful worth to rear children merely that they might rear children who would rear children. What was it all about? What did he want?"[1]

What a dismal anticlimax to a path that should be brighter and brighter unto the perfect day!

II

Let us consider, or at least open up, two very practical questions, for such an anticlimax is a very real liability which threatens every one of us.

First, what are the causes of this partial life of Esau? In very colloquial, modern words, how does Esau "get that way"?

Part of the answer is, very frequently, that his spiritual appetite and powers are never developed, never awakened; that the red-letter day, which is a divine birthright of every man, when a real religious experience comes into his life and gives it momentum and direction, has never occurred. That neglect is often the fault of parents, and is the highest responsi-

[1] From *Babbitt*, by Sinclair Lewis. Reprinted by permission Harcourt, Brace and Company.

bility which men and women ever face. What manner of love is it which trains a child for the superficialities of life, its accessories, its minor episodes, and leaves out the essential meaning of the whole thing? Often is it true that Esau does not sell his birthright himself. He has been robbed of it by never having had it given to him. We frequently, especially in the Eastern part of the United States, read of church pews being left to one's children as bequests in a will. It is easy enough to leave the right to occupy a church pew. It is another matter to leave to one's children the disposition to fill it. May I repeat to every parent, with all the earnestness I may summon, the solemn words of our text—for they are a direct, challenging word to parents—"See to it that no one turns to . . . a profane life as Esau did."

Insensibility to spiritual realities and values is developed by a sort of protective glaze which people put on their minds which prevents truth from entering the secret places of the heart and creating a real spiritual experience. That hardness of surface, that chronic, inattentive shell of absorption is well described in Jesus' parable of the sower. It

is well pictured by George Eliot in her description of Hetty in *Adam Bede:* "Hetty was one of those numerous people who have had god-fathers and god-mothers, learned their catechism, been confirmed, and gone to church every Sunday, and yet for any practical result of strength in life, or trust in death, have never appropriated a single Christian idea or Christian feeling."

When we present a "varnished" mind, impervious to the penetration of spiritual light and life, our nerve response to it is gradually killed. It is the old, old story of the atrophy of the unused power. If the only powers we use are those which deal solely with things, we become the creatures of things. Let us try to put the process in terms which a mechanical age will readily recognize from experience. In a well-made automobile there is no trouble in swiftly shifting from one gear to another. When the change is made the new gear engages at once and continues without wobbling back into the old. But in the life of the mind, in matters of daily conduct, we cannot drive continuously on one gear without letting the others become stiff and rusty. The poverty of Esau is the result of "driving on one gear,"

living life on a low gear, so that the power to "shift into high" is lost.

That is frequently the result of riches, or the devotion to money values, whether it results in much wealth or not. Two results of setting the mind on wealth may be truthfully called inevitable. The emotions dry up and the discernment is dulled.

Finally, the supreme question—How may "profane" history become sacred? How may a man whose spiritual faculties have dulled regain the life of God in his soul? Have we been delineating the relentless forces of a cruel determinism in the mental and spiritual life, or is there a gospel for Esau? There is a despairing accent in the very conclusion to the verse in Hebrews—"He got no chance to repent, though he sought for it with tears." That conclusion sounds like the clanging of the shut gates of Paradise. But we should remember that verse is a comment on Old Testament history. It is not a proclamation of the New Testament gospel. Let Christ declare his own gospel: "If a man loves me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Here is the open secret

for making our lives sacred history—"Love—obey—we will come unto him and make our abode with him." It is the simple yet profound lifelong task of opening the door to the entrance of God. The hinges may swing heavily from long disuse, but while life lasts that door is still on hinges and is never finally and fatefully nailed.

The one event which will make a life story into sacred history is the same event which marked the boundary line between B. C. and A. D. It is the birth of Jesus Christ into the world—the actual world we live in, the very bundle of life which we are. When the door is kept open to his living presence there is a light in the house. It has not become a storehouse of merchandise. It is the home of a living soul, a son of God who dwells with his Father.

XI

CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR

"If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature."
—*2 Corinthians 5. 17.*

"Six Characters in Search of An Author" is the name of a unique and fantastic play by the Italian dramatist, Luigi Pirandello. It is strikingly original in theme and execution, dealing with the problem of the drama itself. Its general emphasis seems to be, so far as it can be stated in a sentence, that the thing called life is so assertive and unruly that it is ever rising to harass and defeat anyone who would interpret it and make it mechanical, rigid, and devitalized.

A company of actors have assembled on the stage of a theater to rehearse a new drama. They are interrupted by the arrival of a group of six "characters" who clamor to be produced. They are in search of an author who will bring them to life by actual presentation. These characters are fantastic in appearance and preserve something of the quality of dreams

which have never yet achieved actuality. In their relation to each other they have a potential drama which they wish to have played. "We bring you a drama, sir!" one of them says to the stage manager.

"We are six most interesting characters, sir," another character pleads, "side-tracked, however."

"That is all quite right," answers the manager, "but what do you want here, all of you?"

"We want to live in you," is the repeated plea of all the characters.

That conception of a possible character seeking to be expressed in a human personality is a gripping theme, for it is an imaginative expression of the real truth of life. To every one of us there comes the potential characters we might be with that pleading appeal—*"We want to live in you!"*

It matters not to our present purpose that the six characters who search for an author in Pirandello's play are a tawdry lot who could not possibly create a noble play, for they have no high motives or great emotions. The conception has a reality far beyond the use which the dramatist makes of it. It pictures graphically the potential character, the noblest

possible self, which seeks an actual author in us to bring it to expression in life. The person that we might be, the capacities that we might develop, the dreams that we might realize, knock at the doors of our souls again and again in our aspirations, our higher impulses, our discontent with what we are, and plead with us—"We want to live—in *you.*"

This conception gives us a poignant realization of the stirring and noble life histories which have never been written, great dramas of personal endeavor and conquest which have never been played out in actual life, because the potential character never found an author. Of a great many men besides Lord Byron, whose words well describe himself, are they sadly true:

"This should have been a noble creature:
With all the energy which should have made
A godly frame of glorious elements
Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
It is an awful chaos . . . light and darkness,
And mind and dust, and passions and pure thoughts
Mixed, and contending without end or order. . . .
All dormant or destructive."

The possible character, the imprisoned splen-

dor of personality locked up within, was never brought to life and allowed to play its part before the world.

Consider this truth with reference to any life. Take the life that we all probably know best—that of Abraham Lincoln. It might seem sheer, extravagant fancy to imagine the matured form of that great, magnanimous, Christlike character, who was President of the United States, as coming to the boy or the young man, the storekeeper or young lawyer in Illinois and pleading with him: "Create me. Be my author. Bring me to life and actuality." In that bald form such a picture would indeed be wholly imagination. Yet is not that the essential meaning of all the lonely struggles and upward choices of the boy and young man, by means of which that heroic character was created and made to live in one of the greatest dramas of all time?

Is it not essentially the process which gives noble meaning to the struggles and conflicts of any life, that a potential character is being realized, that what has existed only as a dream, an ideal, is being brought to life and set, in a speaking part, on the scene of action? In his poem, "The Voiceless," Oliver Wendell

Holmes speaks with tender sympathy of the people who "die with all their music in them." The greatest waste of the world is just that, the unrealized possibilities of human lives, characters who have never found an author.

Our text, "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature," is one of the greatest words of all speech. It enshrines the very heart of the Christian gospel. It pictures both the redeeming and creative power of Christ. It is God's answer to the age-long cry of humanity,

> "Oh for the man to arise in me,
> That the man I am may cease to be."

"Behold, I make all things new," says the great Author, and as his spirit enters into the lives of men, their potential best, divinely energized, is realized. "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

In one of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Note Books,* so full of fantastic and elusive seed thoughts and germinal ideas, one of the short entries is this:

> "Suggestion for a story—story in which the principal character never appears!"

That is all. The very idea is so alluring that

we wish that Hawthorne might have completed it. As we recall the searching and haunting quality of such stories as *The Birthmark* or *The Intelligence Office,* we realize what a memorable tale he might have made of it.

But that story has been written in innumerable human lives. A life that misses its fullness, that never reaches its true capabilities, never develops the potential man, or the possible personality locked up in the crude material of the nature, is a story in which the principal character never appears. The man that "might have been" never emerges from the block of flesh. A sharp tragedy of life is that so many people are like half-carved statues, where the artist has laid down his chisel with the form only partially released from the block of marble; but the parts showing here and there reveal in the beauty of their lines what the rest might have been. Often we feel that the real self in a person never appears, has never been released.

The principal character in every man's life, without which he never comes to his complete fullness of power, is the new creature which might be brought to life by Jesus Christ.

It is the Christ-filled capacities of that man which form the real character that he was designed to be. The story of a human life without the lighting up of its capacities by the spirit of Christ is a story in which the principal character never appears. This is the glory of conversion! Then the plot thickens; a conquest is afoot; the climax is at hand; the hero of the play enters. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature."

Jesus brings the character and author together. The creation of a new, redeemed, empowered personality is not an automatic, mechanical piece of magic, a sort of "presto chango" legerdemain in the moral and spiritual realm. We degrade the glory of conversion when we think of it as something ceremonial. It is a vital process, of the very impartation of life. "The life which I now live . . . I live by the faith of the Son of God." "Here's a character," says the great Life Bringer. "*You* could create it, you could become it." It was thus that Christ spoke to Peter. "Thou *art* Simon. Thou *shalt be* Peter." And as the vision of the possible greatness of discipleship took hold of his soul Peter grew into the stature of the fullness of

Christ and the Galilæan fisherman became the great apostle.

Christ fires the soul with the creative spirit. Life becomes a work of art. Jesus gives to the newly awakened artistic spirit a great theme and a newly won capacity. God spoke to David Livingstone and said: "Write this. Bring this to life." Unrolling before his eyes the script of the great drama of the redemption of Africa, and his own possible rôle in it he said to him, "You can create this. Let this character come to life in you." All through the ages that awakening touch has come to men, often bound with every conceivable shackle and handicap, sunk in the very mire, and has enabled them to become coworkers with God in the creation of a new character, coauthor with God of a new chapter of the manifold Book of Life.

Let us try to glimpse clearly some of the characters which are waiting, pleading to be brought to life in all of us. There is a gallery of them. Swiftly glance at three—three great aspects of Christian character which may be realized in every life.

1. The first let us call the *hero*. Now, the word "hero" is not a word much in favor to-

day. It is not common or particularly popular. It has a grandiloquent sound, too closely related to the specious word "heroics." It has more than a suggestion of a pose about it. It makes us uncomfortably self-conscious to be thought of as a hero. The normal man will almost as violently resent the charge of being a hero as he will that of being a coward. And this feeling is a fine and wholesome one. It saves us from the abomination of egotism and affectation. Yet a distaste for mock heroics should not blind us either to the glory or the necessity of the real thing. Our contempt for a paste diamond should not make us blind to the flash of the true jewel. One of the weaknesses of much contemporary Christianity is just that there is frequently so little real heroism about it. It wears many decorations, but the Red Badge of Courage is often absent. That is always a fatal flaw. For it cannot be absent from a genuine discipleship of Jesus.

By heroism we do not mean the spectacular prodigy of valor. The dramatic and spectacular are accidental. It is the attitude of selfless abandon which is essential. It is the capacity to rise above self-regarding aims,

to lose oneself and truly find oneself in a great purpose, to fling prudence to the winds, to face heavy odds daringly and bear heavy burdens patiently. Our limping prose fails to paint the picture with the glamour of true color. But listen to words that do: "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens. Women received their dead by a resurrection: and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, evil-entreated, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and the holes of the earth."

It is the character which would fit into that company which speaks in the inmost heart of all men, "Let me live in you." It is there pleading for life. God has placed it there.

We all instinctively respond to it as men instinctively straighten their shoulders and stand erect when they confront the perfect human form in the statue of the Apollo Belvedere. It is the vision of humanity at its best. Our hearts thrill at the spectacle of a superb independence of soul, which cannot be deflected by any clink of gold, browbeaten by any show of force, or drugged by a lure of place. Who is not stirred by such a resoluteness of spirit as that which lives in the noble poetry of *Cyrano de Bergerac* in the speech in which Cyrano declines to be purchased for the degrading service of the Duke de Guiche, and makes his Declaration of Independence.

Cyrano: And what must I do?
Seek some protector strong, get me a patron,
And like some humble vine, that twines a trunk,
Upheld by it, the while it strips its bark,
Climb by mere artifice, not rise by strength?
No, thank you. Dedicate, as others do,
Verses to bankers? Make myself a clown
In hopes of seeing on a statesman's lips
A friendly smile appear? I thank you, no!

Shall I be a toad-eater all my days?
My waist worn out by bending, and my skin
Grown quickly soiled in the region of my knees?
Or shall I show how limber is my back?
No, thank you! On both shoulders carry water,
And sit the fence a-straddle, while I flatter
Each to his face, and feather my own nest?
No, thank you! . . .
. . . No! But—sing,
Dream, laugh, and go about, alone and free,
Have eyes that see things clear, and voice that rings,
And, if you like, wear your hat wrong side front;
Fight for a yes or no.[1]

Lift that attitude out of the swashbuckling environment of seventeenth-century France and set it down, for a moment, in your imagination in the twentieth century. The temptation which is offered is the acquiescent acceptance, at the behest of worldly prudence and

[1] From Cyrano de Bergerac, by Edmond Rostand. Lamson, Wolffe & Company, Boston.

advantage, of evils which exist. "Bend your mind around until it conforms to that of those who can pay you well," the voice of the tempter insinuates. "There is no use of being extreme; of running any risk. Prudence is the better part of valor." Answer that bribe with a resounding "No, thank you!" For when that voice prevails the possible character never comes to life.

2. When Jesus described and lived out in detail the ideal of man animated by great enduring love of men, he pictured a potential power of everyone. The *lover* is a character which God seeks to bring to life in us. It is only when Great Heart slips in from the wings to the center of the stage of our lives that the drama takes on real nobility. For the *lover,* after the manner of Jesus, after the manner of Paul, of Saint Francis, is the greatest character of all humanity's rôles. Those oft-quoted words of Pope, "An honest man's the noblest work of God," are far from true. Those words are a perfect reflection of the moral plane of the early eighteenth century. They do not reflect Jesus. They do not reflect the New Testament. An honest man is a noble work of God. But a scrupulous hon-

esty may be cold, formal, selfish, utterly untouched by the spirit of Jesus. God is love. The highest reach of human greatness is the achievement of that divine quality in life. "Religion," says Harnack, "is infinite love in ordinary intercourse." That is the essence of the Christian religion, at any rate. To bring infinite love into ordinary intercourse—that is the supreme rôle of life. The love which lived in Jesus, warm, passionate, stopping at no cost, pleads with us also, "Let me live in you."

3. The *mystic* is a character possible to everyone. Without him, the drama of life, however sumptuously staged, lacks depth and height. It is Hamlet without Hamlet, scenery without soul. The word "mystic," like the word "hero," is one that modern men do not often claim for themselves. Indeed, there is often a question as to whether it stands for anything real; whether the word "mystic" is not the equivalent for "moonshine." We use it here in a general sense of one who is aware of the spiritual world; who is sensitive to spiritual values and who has an experience of God. That character can live in every man. Every man is endowed with a capacity for

fellowship with God. There are, of course, varying degrees of spiritual capacity. The temperament of a Thomas à Kempis, a George Fox, a Saint Theresa, is not that of every person. The spiritual experience of souls of unusual sensitiveness can doubtless never be that of men and women of very different temperament and environment. But that does not mean that a genuine spiritual experience, an actual fellowship with God, is not possible to everyone. There were the widest varieties of religious experience in the first company of twelve men whom Jesus called to be his disciples. Matthew's experience never took on the character of that of John. It was none the less as real. The business man, the laborer, the farmer, the housewife, necessarily absorbed in a variety of practical concerns, without perhaps a great gift for expression, nevertheless may have as real and genuine a spiritual experience in their fellowship in purpose and spirit with Jesus as has ever been had by anyone. This capacity for spiritual life is universal but so often overlaid that it is well-nigh smothered. Stuart P. Sherman has recently pointed out this "mysticism" of the average man.

"The average man," he says, "is a mystic, vaguely hungering for a peace that diplomats cannot give, obscurely seeking the permanent amid the transitory; a poor swimmer struggling for a rock amidst the flow of waters, a lonely pilgrim longing for the shadow of a mighty rock in a weary land."

"We and God have business with each other," says William James, "and in that business our highest destiny is fulfilled." The truth of the spiritual capacities of men is very accurately pictured by the old manuscripts sometimes found in ancient libraries. They are palimpsest. The writing which appears on the surface can be erased or scraped away revealing the original writing which first appeared on the manuscript, and which has been overlaid or partially rubbed out. Every man at heart is a mystic. He is created capable of immortal fellowship with God, but that power is often so overlaid that its very existence is either not suspected or doubted. But deep in every man it lies. Christopher Morley in his little poem entitled "The Palimpsest" has expressed very beautifully this truth of the soul:

"There is, in each man's heart,
Chinese writing—
A secret script, a cryptic language:
The strange ideographs of the spirit,
Scribbled over or half erased
By the swift stenography of daily life.

"No man can easily decipher this cordiscript,
This blurred text corrupted by fears and follies;
But now and then reading his own heart
(So little studied, such fine reading matter!)
He sees fragments of rubric shine through—
Old words of truth and trouble
Illuminated, red and gold."[1]

We are often urged to open our ears to the voices of the world about us. Let us open our ears also to those voices which speak from within; to that dream which asks to be a reality; to that Self which pleads, "Let me live in you."

[1] From *Translations from the Chinese*, published by George H. Doran Company (1922).

XII

THE SEVEN DEADLY VIRTUES

"Let not then your good be evil spoken of."—*Romans 14. 16.*

The number "seven" had a high place of honor in medieval theology. Seven had always been a "holy" or mystic number in the Hebrew religion and in rabbinical lore and the churchmen of the Middle Ages made the most of it. Things evil and good seemed to fall readily into groups of seven. There were the Seven Sacraments of the church, the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Seven Deadly Sins. It is the list of the Seven Deadly Sins which has most deeply impressed the imagination of the world. Art, as well as poetry and legend, throughout the centuries has made the world familiar with the idea that seven sins were accounted deadly.

In the noble group of paintings in the Boston Public Library by Edwin A. Abbey depicting the legend of the Holy Grail there is a memorable one of the Seven Deadly Sins. No

one who has looked at it thoughtfully will ever forget the power of the painter's conception. One of the Knights of the Round Table in chain mail armor is in mortal combat with the Seven Sins, represented by armed figures who are making a terrific onslaught against him. The painting conveys a sense of action which well symbolizes the terrific reality of moral struggle. The painting is impressive not only from the richness of the color or the genius of the artist, but from the universality of the theme. It is the story of the soul of man. It presents man, not only as a fighter, but also as himself a battlefield, for whose possession great forces engaged in deadly conflict.

The same great theme has been expressed in art anew in the year just passed, in the new Cathedral of the Protestant Episcopal Church now being erected in Washington. In this cathedral there is a group of sculptured figures representing in modern dress the Seven Deadly Sins. The conceptions of the artist are ingenious and effective. The settings and garb of the present day make the statuary all the more an eloquent and convincing sermon in stone. The figures representing the Seven

Sins are all grouped around one central figure, Penance.

Pride, a dismayed figure, is not permitted to obscure his mortification in the mire toward which, a witless moment back, he strutted, but is caught midway in his tumble, for all posterity to gaze at.

Envy, penniless, accoutered in dismal garb, ogles the fur coat of a wealthy man.

Anger flails his weak, bloody fists against the vaulting out of which he is molded.

Covetousness stands mute, an abashed and haggard youth, amid the stony evidence of his theft.

Gluttony, with a face half furtive, half swinish, gnaws a bone, one arm encircling a large bottle.

Lust is a serpent twining with subtle coil a man and a woman whom fires devour.

Sloth drowses in his garden. His flowers have long fallen away, and round his sotted head creep the leaves of poison ivy.

We have said that these representations of the Seven Deadly Sins depict the human struggle. In a very real sense they do. But as we look out on life and inward at our own experience, we realize that they do not show

all the struggle against evil. Life would be fairly simple if the clear-cut conflict against recognized evils were all of it. But life is far more complex and subtle than that. It is not only with deadly sins but with *deadly virtues* as well that we have to contend. The enterprise of living means reckoning with the ravages of virtue as well as of vice. The evil in the world comes not only from unbridled wrong but from unbridled good also.

A study of the Seven Deadly Sins is a very rewarding exercise of self-searching. Might not a study of the Seven Deadly Virtues be equally rewarding? Any such list, of course, would be suggestive only, and not dogmatic or arbitrary. But the very process of making one might serve a useful purpose in reminding us afresh that virtues, as well as vices, may become "deadly" when they are unpoised, untempered, unbalanced, unimpassioned, unilluminated by love. The classic list of virtues, drawn up as a complement to the Seven Deadly Sins, is familiar. In the ethics of the Middle Ages and in many standard systems of more recent times there were seven fundamental virtues, the four named by Plato as the primary virtues: courage, wisdom, tem-

perance, and justice, plus the three so-called "Christian" virtues, faith, hope, and love.

Our present list is a very unclassic one, without a trace of authority, save what authority is given it by your own personal experience. Yet it is a real list, withal, for each virtue named represents a major personal problem in our own lives and in the life of the world.

Perhaps this sounds fantastic, merely a preacher's play on words. If you think so, will you step back into the Gospels a moment and watch virtues in action when they grow "deadly"? We refer, of course, to the Pharisees. No doubt the Pharisees were guilty of some of the Seven Sins of the classic list, although pride is the only one usually associated with the Pharisees as a class. But the Pharisees were not outstanding examples of vice, but of virtue. They were men of prodigious virtues. They had admirable qualities which ordinarily do not receive nearly enough credit. They had in a rare degree obedience, conscience, zeal, patriotism. There was one thing which they did not have. They did not have love. And without love, as the center from which all their good qualities radiated

and of which they partook, their virtues became, in a tragically real sense, deadly.

Hold that thought in mind a moment and climb up to that high peak of the New Testament, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. In the first verses of that great hymn of love you will find an amazing list of virtues. Look at them for a moment and consider how high and rare an achievement it would be to realize any one of them; persuasive eloquence for righteousness, "If I speak with the tongue of men and of angels"; knowledge and clear spiritual insight, "If I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge"; indomitable faith, "if I have all faith"; boundless generosity, "if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor"; sacrificial loyalty, "if I give my body to be burned." All these—what an immortal roll of virtue! All these—and "it profiteth me nothing"! For they are virtues good enough as far as they go without the animating soul of love.

What are the virtues that may become deadly? The answer is easy—most any of them. Any virtue of the list which is unbridled, untempered, not supplemented by others which together would make a unified

Christian character, may become deadly to the best possibilities of personality. Let your imagination paint its own picture of the Seven Deadly Virtues, as a complement to the Seven Deadly Sins. Such a painting will reveal many more close, intimate and practical problems in living, which we meet every day, than does the more dramatic picture of the Scarlet Sins.

1. Let *Patience* head our list. If you do not have it, you are not for this world. It is a large ingredient in any effective achievement. That wonderful company of Overcomers, the "King's Own," who have wrought righteousness and put to flight any considerable body of aliens, have never done it without patience. It is an authentic New Testament virtue. Some of the most moving and luxuriant language of the Epistles is that which describes patience. "Be imitators of them who with faith and patience inherit the promise." "Let us run with patience the race which is set before us." "Ye have need of patience." And, finally, "finally" in the sense that there can be nothing beyond it, "the patience of Jesus Christ." What victories patience has won, from building an empire to perfecting an in-

vention, and perfecting that living creation far more wonderful than any invention—a finely wrought character! Who shall be so ignorant of the true sources of the soul's greatness as to disparage patience?

Yet it often becomes a deadly virtue. Of course, our use of words here is inaccurate. It is not the genuine quality of patience which, overdone, becomes an evil, but that limp and inert acquiescence in things as they happen to be which so frequently masquerades as patience that it is widely accepted as the real thing. Patience becomes deadly to ethical development when it is tolerance of things which should stir the indignation. Sometimes this false patience springs from cowardice. It sees, for instance, some of the appalling injustices and brutalities of our industrial order. But any tendencies to action are in the viselike grip of prudential timidity. Indignation is drugged, the pulse beat is iniquitously normal, the tongue is dumb. Sometimes a deadly patience comes from sheer laziness. Who shall devise the adequate penitential litany, to be repeated three times daily with our faces toward Jerusalem, for deliverance from this sluggish ill to which all flesh is heir?

Somewhere back in our family line must be that fabulous monster of a dim prehistoric past, the Giant Sloth! And yet why ask for a litany, when we can apply to this particular need that divine dialogue of Paul with his own soul:

"Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Sometimes the shameful acquiescence comes from mental stupor; sometimes from loveless indifference. "Patience on a monument smiling at grief" is a heroic figure. But patience in an armchair smiling at wrong is far less inspiring. It is one of the chief obstacles to the kingdom of God. "Have patience" is the smooth counsel urged on those people unsophisticated and hot-headed enough to want actually to do something in the face of intrenched evil. The words have an insidious sound; and if we listen too often to them, they cut the nerve of effort and induce the false conclusion that as things have been, so they must be, or else change so slowly that a millennium or so will be required to effect any noticeable result. Far better than the indis-

criminate soporific "Have patience," is the counsel of Paul: "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

2. Consider *Loyalty*. Loyalty is one of the finest words in the language. It is one of the finest traits in human character. Around it group some of the world's imperishable pictures. Prophets, saints, apostles, martyrs, won their crown through loyalty. "I have kept the faith" is the noblest epitaph ever written. Yet our experience reports to us undeniably that what passes for loyalty, and is as frequently mistaken for it, is merely stagnation, merely an absence of growth, of life. It frequently fastens on an accidental or an incidental or supposed aspect of the thing to which one is loyal and becomes a denial of the very spirit of the thing itself. The history of Christianity is strewn with sad examples of that very thing. They are around us in profusion to-day. Some people imagine that they are being loyal to the religion of Jesus when what they are exhibiting is merely a blind stubbornness, clinging to theories of science generally accepted seventy-five years ago and long since discredited; theories, moreover, which no more affect Christian faith

than the law of specific gravity or any one of the theorems of geometry. This confused stubbornness characterizes the "bitter-ender," the "die-hard," who has fought every advance step in religion, whether in practical activity or in thought. Mr. Kauffer's quatrain on the parrot is a snapshot of this kind of parrot loyalty:

"The parrot's voice snaps out.
No good to contradict.
What he says he'll say again:
Dry facts like biscuits."

The inability or unwillingness to distinguish essentials from non-essentials is the greatest obstacle to real progress in politics as well as religion. An automatic adherence to meaningless party labels as a substitute for weighing facts and forming personal convictions is a bane of democracy.

Sir Wallis Budge, the curator of the British Museum, tells the story of two old ladies, apparently sisters, who came regularly to the museum and sat in front of a certain mummy for a considerable time. They explained that when they wanted to make a decision in their lives, they always asked the mummy, who

always nodded its head if the answer was "yes."

Sir Wallis examined the mummy and found that the bone at the nape of the mummy's neck was resting on a support, but that the head was in some way or other just swinging clear of the top of the casket. He then realized that a certain vibration would cause the head to move very gently in an affirmative direction. On making further investigations, he found that when a board on the floor was trodden on heavily at a given point, the mummy's head would slowly move!

Here were two ladies ruling their lives by the nods of a mummy! And in doing so they were a perfect picture of multitudes who take their only direction from an embalmed tradition, a mummy, something that once had life. "The letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive" is the guiding principle of all true loyalty. As Christians our loyalty is not to any solidified formulas or to any traditional creed but to the living Christ.

3. Dare anyone suggest that *Patriotism* may be, in some manifestations, a deadly virtue? If he does, he should prepare himself to be a target for most of the bad names in

the dictionary, beginning with "pacifist" and "slacker," passing through "Bolshevist" and "Red" and ending up with "traitor." But that very attitude of mind which cannot tolerate the thought that anything labeled patriotism could be anything less than one hundred per cent virtue, is an illustration of a virtue distorted and corrupted. Patriotism is deadly when one becomes a "professional patriot," to use a common expression; for all virtue is spoiled when professionalized.

The professional patriot is a self-appointed judge and censor of the patriotism of all other citizens. He measures ideas and persons with his little yard stick of one hundred per cent satisfaction of the *status quo* and to him nearly all liberal thought is unpatriotic. There seems to be a tendency for some so-called patriotic societies to breed this obnoxious type of person. At least in recent years these "professionals" have thrived and generously heaped slander on some of the noblest and ablest citizens of the country, whose economic and social views differed in any particular from their own.

Patriotism is deadly when it is merely militarism, masquerading under the cover of the

honored name of patriotism. And this is a masquerade which has characterized all periods of history and all nations. It is a common camouflage to-day. Indeed, it is the largest part of the strength of militarism that it can so successfully use the emotion of patriotism to bolster up its propaganda and purposes. Patriotism is identified with military expression. Every effort is made to label devotion to the cause of peace as unpatriotic. Nothing is more necessary as a contribution to the growing demand throughout the world for adequate safeguards of peace than to end the false identification of patriotism with military concerns. Patriotism is too high and noble a thing to be used by jingos for their own purposes. Richard LeGallienne has strikingly protested against the misuse of the emotion of patriotism by playing upon the emotions:

"War
I abhor
And yet how sweet
The sound along the marching street
Of drum and fife, and I forget
Wet eyes of widows, and forget
Broken old mothers, and the whole
Dark butchery without a soul.

"Without a soul, sure this bright drink
Of heady music, sweet as death:
And e'en my peace abiding feet
Go marching with the marching street;
For yonder, yonder goes the fife
And what care I for human life?
The tears fill my astonished eyes
And my full heart is like to break,
And yet 'tis all embannered lies
A dream those little drummers make!

"O, it is wickedness to clothe
Yon hideous grinning thing that stalks
Hidden in music, like a queen
That in a garden of glory walks,
Till good men love the thing they loathe.
Art, thou hast many infamies,
But not an infamy like this!
O, snap the fife and still the drum
And show the monster as she is!"[1]

The evil spirit of national egotism, of braggadocio, parades its ugliness under the cloak of patriotism, to which name it has no slightest right. The Chicago Tribune screams out this false, degenerate nationalism every day by running at its flagstaff that discredited abomination of Stephen Decatur, "My country, may she ever be right, but right or wrong,

[1] The Illusion of War, from "Silk Hat Soldier," by Richard LeGallienne. Reprinted by permission of Dodd, Mead & Company.

my country." The crass paganism of this sentiment implies that patriotism is something which runs counter to and is superior to, the laws of morality and the laws of God. A worse slander on real patriotism would be impossible to imagine.

4. How easily *Thrift* becomes a corrupted virtue! It may seem entirely uncalled for to point out any dangers connected with thrift, in this day of wastefulness and extravagance. It is a virtue always in season, never more so—shall we say, never so much so?—as to-day. It is good that Benjamin Franklin is in our national calendar of saints. His gospel of Poor Richard is a gospel for an Age of Mortgages. And yet, O Thrift, what crimes are committed in thy name! How insidiously it becomes an end in itself. When the overweening habit of thrift lays unguarded and unrestrained hands on a life, it is the graces of life, its cultural aspects which suffer first and suffer most. "We can get along without books but we must have potatoes." True enough! But the thrift spirit waxes and it is not only potatoes which crowd out the books—it is the automobile and the whole materialistic side of life against the things of the spirit. Many people have de-

voted so much of their energies to saving up for a rainy day that they have made the whole of life one long drizzle under dull skies. The possible humanities and generous joys that might have enriched life have been butchered to make a bank deposit.

Thrift which has gotten out of hand chills the spirit of benevolence. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberality. We need to watch and pray lest we be stricken with a deadening paralysis of the power of giving. The inordinate passion for a good investment easily destroys the power of actually giving away anything. It ought not to be forgotten, of course, that many people of limited income are able to give generously to church and charity only because they have practiced a rigid economy. But that thrift springs from love and is not the deadly virtue we are thinking of now. In the campaign for economy many rule out as a first measure any indulgence in generous giving. Their heart becomes a refrigerator with silver doors.

Again, in this connection, our general principal stands out clearly—that a "deadly" virtue is one without love as both its source and control.

5. *Zeal* is a virtue inculcated, praised, and illustrated in undying words in the New Testament. In that same New Testament also, however, the ravages of zeal without discrimination, or, what is more important, zeal without love, are also set forth with tremendous force. That was the essential tragedy of the Pharisees—a zeal which fastened on to superficial, outside things, jelly things of no real significance, without discrimination between trifles and chief moral values and without love which reached out to men with tenderness and sympathy.

Such a zeal becomes deadly, for it becomes inhuman. The evolution of zeal into fanaticism is a familiar tale. It makes sorry reading. But let us always ponder it. Zeal, unrestrained and untempered, has laid waste in the person in its grip whole tracts of human nature which ought to have blossomed abundantly. Sympathy has been made an arid desert by it. The sense of humor has often been atrophied by it. And the sense of humor is one of the graces of the spirit which cannot be spared from the redeeming work God has on hand in the world.

In a heart-breaking picture drawn from his

own bitter experience in youth, Edmund Gosse, in that powerful but sad book, *Father and Son,* has drawn a painful picture of the effect of religious zeal which has run unchecked into fanaticism:

"I have surely the right to protest against the untruth (would that I could apply it to any other word!) that evangelical religion, or any religion in a violent form, is a wholesome or valuable or desirable adjunct to human life. It divides heart from heart. It sets up a vain, chimerical ideal, in the barren pursuit of which all the tender, indulgent affections, all the genial play of life, all the exquisite pleasures and soft resignations of the body, all that enlarges and calms the soul, are exchanged for what is harsh and void and negative. It encourages a stern and ignorant spirit of condemnation; it throws together out of gear the healthy movement of the conscience; it invents sins which are no sins at all, but which darken the heaven of innocent joy with futile clouds of remorse. There is something horrible . . . in the fanaticism that can do nothing with this pathetic and fugitive existence of ours but treat it as if it were the uncomfortable antechamber to a palace which no one has ex-

plored, and the plan of which we know absolutely nothing."[1]

That text of Scripture, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up," is sometimes true in a tragic sense, as well as the sublime one which is the original meaning of the words. For zeal has eaten up elements of personality which cannot be impaired without ruining that full-rounded Christian character which it is the purpose of the gospel to produce.

These considerations are not for a moment to be taken to mean that languor and indifference are to be preferred to zeal. They are simply reminders of what is the one point of our whole sermon, that we must go our own way "looking unto Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith." For in him the fires of a zeal for God never slackened or burned low. But it was a zeal which sprang from love, an expressing of yearning tenderness. His grace can create that same mind in us.

6. *Order* is so beautiful a virtue that it has been called heaven's first law. Perhaps it is only one with a disorderly mind who sees any possible dangers connected with a pas-

[1] From *Father and Son*, by Edmund Gorse. Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

sion for orderliness. Perhaps this fear of a too great exercise of the virtue of order is merely personal with myself. If so, pray indulge it a moment. I have suffered all my life from an inferiority complex in the presence of persons of orderly habits. So it may be that my antipathy, if it be such, to order is merely an expression of that inferiority, a sort of "defense mechanism" set up in my mind, to use the fashionable Freudian jargon!

Yet, honestly, *is* order heaven's first law? Is not, rather, the whole story of God's grace the story of a surprise, an unreasonable, unpredictable inversion of the usual, the conventional, the orderly? Consider that miserable maxim, often quoted as though it had the authority of Scripture, "A place for everything and everything in its place." Who would want to live in such a world? It sounds exactly like a schoolroom or an efficient department store. Such a world would be robbed of all surprise. And that maxim is not followed either in nature or in grace. "Everything in its place"—what attention do the wild flowers pay to such a preposterous idea? They bloom joyfully in the impossible places. Everything in its place? What sort

of a place is a stable for a baby? Yet there was a Baby in a stable once. And because of it the angels sang for joy. The Baby in the stable was not an error. He was God's Surprise Party. God can break through any order when a great enterprise is on foot.

God fulfills himself in many ways. A passion for the right order becomes deadly when it denies, consciously or unconsciously, that great truth. For an absorption with order has a tricky way of degenerating into formalism, into superficiality. The original high aims become lost in a maze of red tape. Little things look large. A vivid commentary on the whole course of Christian history was to be found in a newspaper story the other day from Groton, Connecticut, where a dwelling house dating from the seventeenth century was completely destroyed by fire owing to delay by the firemen in getting official permission to leave the fire district. Think of it—haggling over "official permission" while the fire burned! Yet how often have Christian people argued over "official permission" to save souls! Suffer again the Word of God on this matter —"The letter killeth but the spirit maketh alive."

7. Finally—there is a finally even to this sermon—glance at that blending or combination of qualities and attitudes to which is given the fine old name of *"piety."* Let us tread softly here, for the place whereon we stand is holy ground. We do well to hesitate lest there be the least possibility of anyone gaining the impression of a failure to appreciate and venerate piety. There is no need of our land, our world, our time, quite so deep as the need of a vital piety. The word may have an old-fashioned sound to it. May God pity us if the thing itself ever becomes obsolete and out of date!

Yet—there is a "yet" connected with it—we cannot be blind ourselves to the danger of a personal devotion, a personal piety becoming self-centered, individualistic and insulated from crude contacts with an evil world. There is an ever-present danger of a church which stresses too exclusively the comforts and peace of a personal religion, becoming a church on an island separated from the sinning, suffering, and confused swarm of life on the mainland.

William James, warning against the dangers of too abstract speculation, says, "One is

always obliged to get down from noble aloofness into the muddy stream of concrete things." We are called, if we follow Christ, not only to get into the muddy stream of concrete things but into the bloody stream of concrete sacrificial life. We cannot do it with a noble aloofness.

"His name shall be called Immanuel, for he shall save his people from their sins." And from their virtues! The spirit of Jesus will bring every thought, every trait of character into captivity to the dominance of the one central passion of love.

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